For White Social Workers: RE/UN/DIScover Heuristic for Dual Awareness in Ongoing Anti-Racist Practice

Elizabeth King Keenan

Abstract: Although many White social workers engage in ongoing anti-racist actions, they may still be complicit in perpetuating and reinforcing racism and White Supremacy Culture. Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) social workers, activists, and scholars have described the numerous ways in which the harmful impacts of White Supremacy Culture appear in the well-intentioned efforts of White people who seek to be anti-racist. White social workers are thus responsible for engaging in intentional ongoing practices to identify, interrupt, and shift their interpersonal oppressive uses of power in their practice. The RE/UN/DIScover heuristic is an iterative, embodied set of three practices for working with one's experiences of shame and internalized dominance, habitual not-seeing, and in-the-moment activations. Literature theorizing White Supremacy ideology and culture frames the description of the RE/UN/DIScover heuristic. This paper describes several heuristic applications, including prompts for engaging in REcover, UNcover and DIScover practices and two composite examples. These applications illustrate how to use the heuristic practices with dual awareness of self and one's social work practice in the moment and over time. White social workers are encouraged to learn and use the RE/UN/DIScover heuristic practices to guide their efforts to more fully live into their anti-racist commitments in moments of not-seeing and moments of activation.

Keywords: White social workers; anti-racist; social work practice; power; heuristic

Whiteness is a socially constructed structural position of dominance that bestows material, social, and psychological advantages to those who pass the pigmentocracy criteria (Bonilla-Silva, 2004; Menakem, 2022). W.E.B. Du Bois (1935/1997) described these advantages as an invisible public and psychological wage exported throughout the world through color prejudice. Inverting long-standing causal assumptions, Kendi's (2016) analysis illuminated the ways that White economic and political self-interests have fueled racist policies and laws which became buttressed by racist ideologies and racial bias. To maintain dominance and control, Whiteness has justified genocide, enslavement, and other forms of systemic brutality with White Supremacist ideology (Plummer et al., 2021). Critical race theorists articulate how dominance and control are further perpetuated with various permutations of racialized societal practices in structural, disciplinary, hegemonic, and interpersonal forms of racism (see, for example, Collins, 2008; Crenshaw et al., 1996).

After the Jim Crow era, investment in this public and psychological wage (DuBois, 1997) spawned a racialized structure of social practices that turned White supremacist beliefs into everyday institutional policies and procedures, rendering Whiteness more and more invisible (Hanna et al., 2021). Bonilla-Silva's (2022) research on color-blind racism illuminates the invisible power dynamics operating through mutually reinforcing interactions of material benefit and racial ideology in this racialized social structure of

Elizabeth King Keenan, PhD, LCSW, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT.

social practices. The four frames of color-blind racism (abstract liberalism, naturalization, minimization, and cultural racism) make racial stratification appear "non-racial, habituated, and even apparently race-neutral" across institutions, including capitalist market system inequities (Bonilla-Silva, 2021, p. 514*)*. White affective, attitudinal, behavioral, and cultural standards interwoven with "ableist, capitalist, Christian, European, heteronormative, and patriarchal values" maintain these inter- and intra-racial hierarchies by reifying existing power relationships across other social hierarchies" (Miller, 2022, p. 5).

Social movement and progressive organization leaders, along with many social science and social work faculty have utilized this knowledge about Whiteness and racism to develop a variety of trainings and courses for students, employees, and activists. In addition to learning about structural forms of racism, these offerings typically focus on discrimination, microaggressions, bias, and other racial societal practices. The current Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (2022) supports such learning with competencies about racial justice and anti-racist practice. Developing the capacity to see and understand the shifting manifestations of Whiteness and White Supremacy over time is necessary to resist and redress the insidious effects on Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC; Frey et al., 2021).

Less attention has been paid to how social work manifests Whiteness. The profession has participated in and perpetuated White supremacy ideology and culture through efforts for legitimization, and through oppressive practices across all fields of practice (McCoy, 2020; Stanley, 2020). As Bonilla-Silva (2021) states, "the 'systemic' in 'systemic racism' means that we all participate in the reproduction of the racialized order" with "normative, habituated, and often unconscious" behaviors and practices (p. 513). Examining social work practices to understand how they may be perpetuating racial stratification is beginning to gain traction with the rise of more Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) social work leaders and increased numbers of BIPOC social workers in general. Since approximately 65% of social workers in the U.S. are White, White social workers also need to actively participate in this work to stop reproducing racism (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2022).

Contemporary BIPOC social workers, activists, and scholars have described the numerous ways in which the harmful impacts of White Supremacy Culture (WSC) appear in the well-intentioned efforts of White people who seek to be anti-racist (Okun, 2021). Some of these include: generations of white bodies being conditioned to disconnect from sensing and feeling violence in all its forms and remaining silent (Menakem, 2022; Ricketts, 2021); to have limited self-knowledge and a distorted sense of self (Goodman, 2011; Mattheus & Marino, 2011); to experience shame and harsh self-judgment out of expectations for perfectionism and mastery (DiAngelo, 2021; Okun, 2021); to expect comfort and familiarity during interactions rather than taking individual responsibility for one's experience of emotions (Menakem, 2017; Ricketts, 2021); and to express niceness or politeness rather than authenticity (DiAngelo, 2021).

White people often become activated because they have not had to learn how to hold space for racialized tension and discomfort (Menakem, 2022). The insidiousness of White

supremacy culture requires ongoing practice to dismantle its many tentacled manifestations. White social workers are thus responsible for engaging in intentional practices to identify, interrupt, and shift interpersonal oppressive uses of power in their practice (e.g., conducting intakes in a routinized manner, using an individual diagnostic lens to formulate understandings of challenges, failing to engage clients in meaningful creation of goals and plans, devaluing contributions of colleagues who have less organizational status). Developing the capacity to unlearn WSC and be more fully present and responsible for one's inner experiences regarding racism responds to Fisher's (2021) clarion call to "evolve because systems will always continue to find ways to evade and pervert justice" (p. 704-705).

At an institutional level, the profession's construction of continuing education for licensure paradoxically works against ongoing anti-racist learning and practice. An underlying assumption that one need only "clock" a certain number of continuing education hours per year on any practice topic enacts WSC's emphasis on quantity over quality, mastery, perfectionism, and either/or thinking (Asher BlackDeer & Gandarilla Ocampo, 2022; Okun, 2021). White comfort is promoted since one can say "I've done my 15 hours of training, so I am competent to practice." Recommendations for what White people can do after public outcry to the brutal murder of a Black person, such as Mr. George Floyd, can also unintentionally feed notions of false comfort (e.g., one can say one is antiracist after reading a book or viewing a podcast about racism). To counter these tendencies, anti-racism, and unlearning Whiteness workshops provide experiential learning and strategies that address discomfort and deepen awareness (see, for example, the Peoples' Institute for Survival and Beyond, n.d.). These time-limited events typically conclude with recommendations to continue to "do the work" of unlearning racism and WSC, however, White people have generally not continued to engage in such ongoing practices, individually or collectively.

WSC's expectations about perfectionism also serve to surreptitiously inhibit unlearning and ongoing practice through a preoccupation with racial group membership and standards (Miller, 2022). Internalized WSC patterns of self-judgment can trigger shame and emotional reactivity when one does not measure up to WSC standards (DiAngelo, 2021; Okun, 2021). One typically cannot be open to hearing nor respond to one's impact in interactions if feeling fearful of being judged (by oneself; Ibrahim, n.d.).

Neuroscience research sheds light on what may be happening. Through neuroception, our bodies sense whether situations and people are safe, dangerous, or potentially threatening (Porges, 2011). Humans shift into reactive states when feeling real or perceived threats (e.g., hypo- and hyper-arousals, fight, flight, freeze, and feign reactions; Malchiodi, 2021). Shame-based judgments are often perceived as threats, triggering a shift out of an optimal zone of arousal, resulting in reactive and defensive behaviors that diminish the capacity for anti-racism work with others (Ogden & Fisher, 2015). Menakem (2017) stated that White bodies can be thinking they are "safe" yet their bodies signal otherwise when in the presence of BIPOC because of the "ideas and images that were created, perpetuated, and institutionalized over hundreds of years—all for the benefit of powerful, white bodies" (p. 206). The danger is not coming from Black bodies, but rather from the generations of

conditioning perpetuating that perception, including internalized WSC patterns of judgment.

White social workers have the potential to engage when in an optimal zone of arousal, or window of tolerance (Siegel, 2020). Within this optimal zone, one can be present, open, and aware of what is going on in the moment, and with curiosity, reflect, consider choices, and interact with others in racialized situations. One also has the capacity to be with one's intense reactions and perceived threats without automatically reacting out of them, allowing for intentional action. When mind and body are connected in the present, "we are less swept away by our habitual thinking and feeling that colours our perceptions" (Wong & Vinsky, 2021, p. 191). White people can more accurately assess threats and sift out the conditioning that fuels perceived threats. Throughout this paper, this optimal zone will be referred to as the window of capacity (WOC) to reflect the current emphasis on going beyond the tolerance of distress within trauma literature, and to focus on the potential when in this embodied space (Malchiodi, 2021).

Neuroscience research and Okun's (2021) antidotes to WSC can inform White people's efforts to shift their expectations from WSC perfection/mastery to an expectation that they will be activated. Expecting activation creates an inner space from which to learn (not just suppress, push through, or hold firm), and with self-compassion, notice and work with what arises. Working on one's inner experiences with others over time will strengthen one's holistic capacity to be more fully present, notice how power is used in everyday spaces, and make courageous choices within interactions.

The RE/UN/DIScover heuristic is a guide for working with one's inner experiences while working to dismantle White supremacy and co-create anti-oppressive cultures with groups of people with whom one works and lives. The heuristic can guide the ongoing practice of unlearning racialized socialization habits, working with the bodily sensations and emotions associated with the impact of White societal practices and beliefs, and learning how to resist and shift the racialized social systems in which White social workers work. Developing new cultural practices and habits requires commitment, intentionality, and collective ongoing practices, attending to the mutually reinforcing relations between body, mind, and relationships (Siegel, 2018).
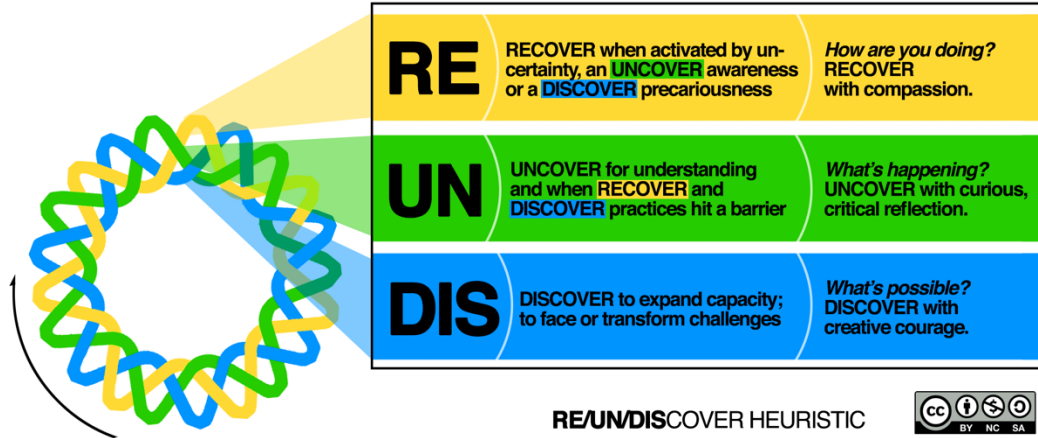
This paper further develops the RE/UN/DIScover heuristic (Keenan, 2021) to guide White social workers' intentional responses regarding racism and WSC in the moment and over time. RE/UN/DIScover is an iterative, embodied heuristic that builds the capacity for White social workers to identify, interrupt, and shift interpersonal oppressive uses of power in their practice, to attend to one's inner experiences as one engages in periods of unlearning, and to discover ways to live into one's anti-racist commitments across a range of interactions.

RE/UN/DIScover Heuristic

A heuristic is a process or method that guides efforts to work with complexity (Frimodig, 2023). This heuristic is an intentional, iterative flow of movement between three

sets of practices and qualities: REcover with compassion; UNcover with curious, critical reflection; and DIScover with creative courage in relational connection (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. *RE/UN/DIScover Heuristic*

All three sets of practices are based on the experience of "holding space" with self, and others, in a social field (Scharmer & Pomeroy, 2020, para. 9). Within oneself holding space is a felt sense of internal spaciousness to be with one's inner experiences and witness one's urges and impulses from the reptilian brain without automatically reacting from them. The spaciousness also allows for "dual awareness to witness and embody the felt sense of empowering impulses for action" within one's WOC (Ogden, 2015, p. 516). People can hold space for and with each other to strengthen group capacity to collectively face experiences and challenges. The felt sense of holding space supports "trust in acting from a place of humility, vulnerability, and surrendering to what wants to emerge" in the company of others (Scharmer & Pomeroy, 2020, para. 21).

REcover With Compassion

REcover practices facilitate shifts back into one's WOC when one is activated to the edge or out of their WOC. Two images capture this awareness: a stop light (green is WOC, yellow is at the edge, red is out of WOC) or thumb signals (thumb up is WOC, thumb to the side is at the edge, and thumb down is out of WOC). Routine tuning in throughout one's day facilitates more immediate awareness when one is activated. As noted above, White people interacting in predominantly White spaces often do not need to tune into self because the spaces provide White people with comfort through various norms and taboos mitigating against discussing racism and White supremacy. White people may also be challenged to notice and work with one's inner sensations and activations out of their WOC. Engaging in anti-racism work thus includes shifting one's expectations from "having" an external holding space to taking responsibility and consistently practicing creating an inner one.

Figure 2. *RE/UN/DIScover Practices*

REcover Practices

- Brief pause
- Paced breathing
- Orient to one's surroundings
- Touch one's palm, thigh, arm, face, abdomen, or chest
- Gently rock or other movements
- Use imagery of trusted people or pets being behind or next to you and sense their support
- Other mindfulness, somatic, sensory, or contemplative practices
- Sources: Center for Contemplative Mind in Society (n.d.), Kabat-Zinn (2003), Menakem (2017, 2022), Ogden & Fisher (2015), and Siegel (2018)

UNcover Practices

- Alone and with others:
- Examine one's beliefs and biases
- Do a power analysis to identify the way(s) power is being used and its impacts
- Use critical frameworks to interpret situations
- Identify oppressive and anti-oppressive patterns across time and/or ecological levels
- Replace negative (colonized) patterns of thinking, emotions, and actions with affirming patterns
- Sources: Building Movement Project (2018), dRworks (2021), Fook (2022), Pyles (2021), Wong & Vinsky (2021), Yellow Bird (2013)

DIScover Practices

- Listen for multiple visions and intentions within a group
- Hold space for one's discomfort in a situation
- Resist the urge to fix
- Imagine what dismantling WSC and amplifying flourishing look like
- Use a dual focus on self and others in a situation
- Hold space for not knowing and "do not know how to"
- Use a group-level lens to understand racialized interactions and situations
- Learn how to act with courage and respect when interrupting and resisting oppressive patterns
- Co-create pathways to move from how things are now toward a specific vision
- Try, do, and learn from the impact
- Hold space for the uncertainty in between existing patterns and new patterns
- Sources: brown (2017), Building Movement Project (2018), Fisher (2021), Gottlieb, (2020), Haga (2020), Menakem (2017, 2022), Okun, (2021), and Vinsky and Prevatt-Hyles (2022)

To create an inner holding space, one begins by identifying which existing practices support attention, awareness, and holding space in the present moment (see Figure 1). Routine tuning in throughout one's day will illuminate opportunities to use REcover practices with everyday stressors. Practicing with compassion conveys a felt sense of holding space for these inner shifts. As one becomes more skillful, these practices can be used with racial activations. Since it is possible to expand one's WOC, one also engages in regular REcover practice with a frequency similar to regular exercise habits. Consistent

practice strengthens one's capacity to hold space with compassion for the intense sensations, emotions, thoughts, and urges that arise when having a new race-related awareness (e.g., seeing how an administrator expresses cultural racism by blaming BIPOC people with low incomes for "failing" to access an organization's services rather than changing the organizational procedures that create barriers), and when working with others to dismantle it.

UNcover With Curiosity and Critical Reflection

Curious, critical reflection seeks to unearth patterns of power to see the connections between oneself and the social structures within one's life (Finn & Jacobson, 2003). Intentional curiosity can counteract White social workers' tendency to engage in harsh critiques towards self and other White people. Through Uncover practices, White social workers examine how their positionality informs what they see and how they are impacted or advantaged in specific situations (see Figure 2). White social workers' positionalities are a combination of professional power by virtue of one's credentials and White advantage along with one's other intersectional social identities. They critically reflect on how their assumptions, beliefs, and potential biases influence how they experience a situation and how they use their power (Wong & Vinsky, 2021).

White Supremacy Culture exerts power in the ways it both constructs what people know and constrains people's actions (Collins, 2008; Solorzáno & Yosso, 2002). UNcover practices illuminate these patterns with frameworks such as critical theories and cultural humility to "organize and to interpret information through a specific lens as well as to ground and to center the mind" (Lerner, 2022, p. 610). Intentionally selecting frameworks for UNcover practices can thus serve as antidotes to White supremacy ideology and disrupt the plasticity paradox (i.e., how the brain persists in existing habits and ways of thinking; Yellow Bird, 2013).

The main UNcover practice is power analysis, looking at the range of ways that power moves in specific interactions, organizational structures, and cultures (Pyles, 2021). Power can be harmful, taking form as oppressive "power over" impositions or as collusive power to hold onto control of resources or decisions within a group (Tew; 2006). Power can also be fruitful, taking form as power from within self, power with others, and power to do individually and collectively (Townsend et al., 1999). Social workers need to be particularly mindful when using protective power, i.e., seeking to use one's status in the service of those who cannot act on their own behalf or are blocked access to full participation. The impact of protective power can be experienced as either supportive and/or oppressive (Tew, 2006).

From a space of curiosity, UNcover practices look at the meaning and impact of how past patterns of power (harmful and fruitful) might still be alive in the present, and at what levels (intra- and interpersonal, and in organizations and institutions). Through conversations, White social workers UNcover how other White people might be advantaged in a situation and in what ways, and how those who are targeted or impacted are responding and making sense of what is happening (Finn & Jacobson, 2003). Yellow

Bird (2013) notes that these practices liberate "the mind and brain from oppressive thoughts, emotions and actions" (p. 294).

DIScover With Creative Courage

Since oppressive and collusive forms of power are inherent in WSC, DIScover practices rely on creative courage to attend to how White people are with themselves and others in the doing of the work as well as the work itself (see Figure 2). DIScover practices focus on "what's possible" because social workers believe in the capacity of human beings to "act in the world as an intentional, creative, meaning-making being, whose actions are shaped and constrained but never fully determined by life circumstances" (Finn & Jacobson, 2003, p. 71). Although the need for structural transformation is indeed pressing and urgent, action to dismantle White supremacy also includes White people discovering how to be in relationship with self and others from a stance of cultural humility (Gottlieb, 2020).

DIScover practices counteract WSC pressures in three ways: 1) by engaging in a slow, deliberate pace to disrupt the urge to fix while also interrupting and stopping harm when indicated (brown, 2017; Haga, 2020); 2) by adopting a "not yet" experimental mindset of noticing, trying, experiencing shifts, and using the learning to continue trying to interrupt perfectionism and mastery (Building Movement Project, 2018); and 3) by centering relationships, recognition and co-creation to disrupt individualism and control (brown, 2017; Okun, 2021). DIScover practices use Uncover understandings of patterns of power, and draw on many ways of doing, knowing, and being to interrupt and resist WSC and to imagine and co-create ways of being and flourishing that "serve more than one worldview" (brown, 2017, p. 159).

How to use the RE/UN/DIScover Heuristic

To use the RE/UN/DIScover heuristic, White social workers engage in an iterative flow of heuristic practices that are responsive to each situation. Figure 1 shows overarching questions for each set of practices: How are you doing? What's happening? What's possible? If at the edge of or outside of one's WOC, one engages in REcover practices to shift back into one's optimal level of arousal to continue. Depending on what is already understood about activation or specific situation, one delves into UNcover practices or moves to DIScover practices to imagine, create, learn, interrupt, resist, disorganize, and/or reorganize. The heuristic can be used to work with oneself over time as well as when working with others in specific situations. Bringing compassionate response to REcover, curious critical reflection to UNcover understandings, and creative courage to DIScover how to work with one's learning edges can strengthen White people's ability to participate in dismantling, rather than perpetuating White supremacy.

RE/UN/DIScover Heuristic to Strengthen and Expand Self Capacity

Dismantling White supremacy requires focusing on three aspects of self: a) working to build the muscle to hold space for one's inner experience, sensations, thoughts, emotions,
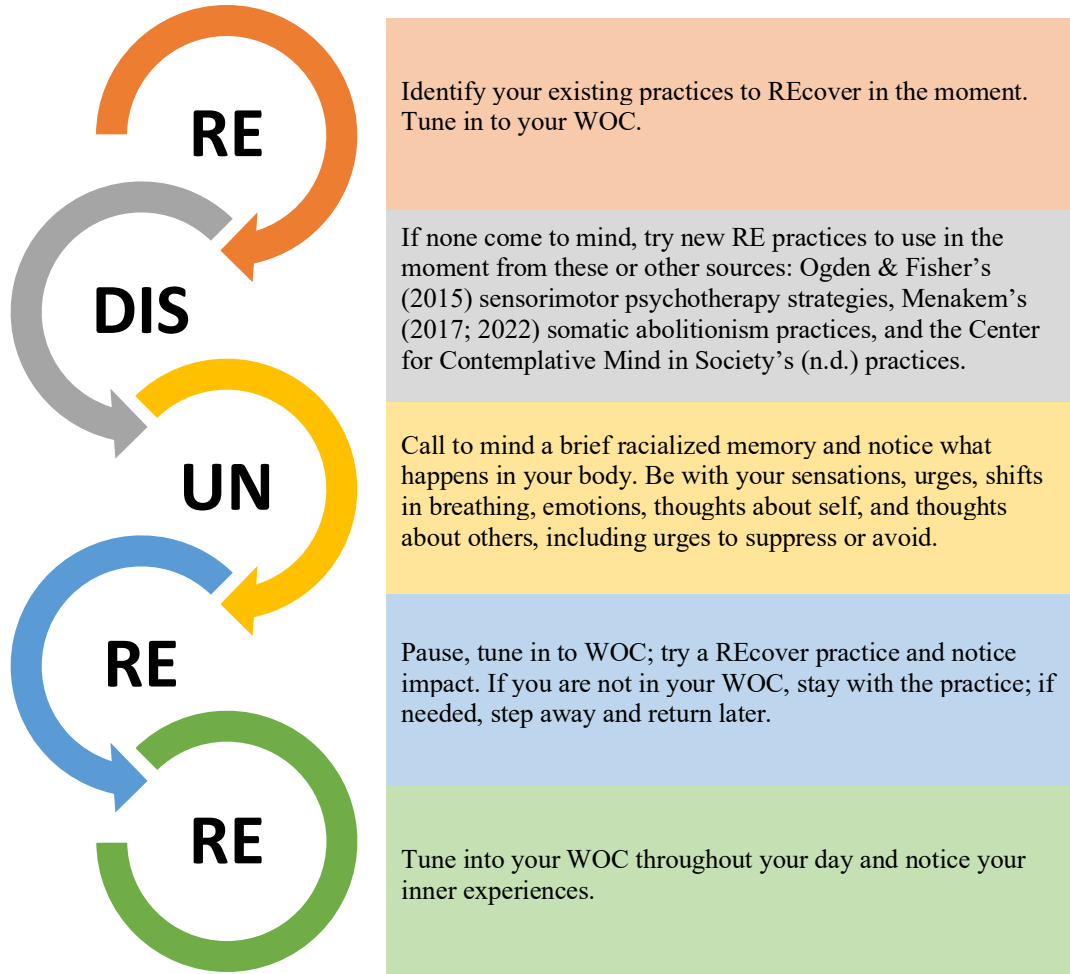
and urges to be able to choose actions that are anti-racist, b) working with the ways White people internalize and enact dominance and superiority, and c) shifting from shame to guilt.

Holding Space for Inner Experiences

Intentional, ongoing practice is necessary to work with reactive defensiveness unconsciously activated when one experiences anxiety or perceives threat (Marino & Mattheus, 2011). White people can perceive threat in the face of losing power, face, comfort, and privilege (Okun, 2021). Lacking capacity to hold space for these feared losses, White people have the tendency to treat themselves with WSC messages and behaviors by "pushing through" the discomfort and intense emotions to get "past" them to feel "better." Defensiveness and pushing through both result in "dirty pain," the "pain of avoidance, blame, and denial" that hurts and harms others with the impact of those actions (Menakem, 2017, p. 20). While psychological defenses decrease the intensity of anxiety, defending against and trying to push through pain and discomfort blocks one's ability to fully engage and learn (Goodman, 2011, p. 51). Some common White group-level defensive behaviors emerging from psychological defenses include: giving "Perfectly Logical Explanations," separating oneself from group ("I'm not like that"), devaluing White people who act "like that," overidentifying with BIPOC, making dismissive statements ("oh, that's not about race"), minimizing, joking about or denying the racialized aspect of a situation, negating BIPOCs' reality, and taking charge to feel in control (Marino & Mattheus; 2011; Saad, 2020).

White people can learn to experience and work with "clean pain," the "pain that mends and can build our capacity for growth" by cultivating the ability to hold space to witness, not react out of inner experience, allowing the pain to move, shift, and metabolize within one's body (Menakem, 2017, p. 19). The heuristic supports building the muscle to work with the "clean pain we experience when we don't know what to do, when we are scared, and when we step forward into the unknown anyway, with honesty and vulnerability" (Menakem, 2017, p. 19). This is slow, deliberate, embodied work.

Much like physical muscle strengthening or desensitization, one starts building embodied muscle to hold space for one's inner experiences with awareness and the use of REcover practices in situations of mild activation. It is common for many White people to initially have difficulty noticing and experiencing bodily sensations due to WSC socialization. Awareness can be learned, however, with consistent practice of various mindfulness and somatic practices (Siegel, 2018). Once awareness is established, one can start with racialized memories that are not too overwhelming (an interaction that recently happened, an awareness about oneself) before moving to past and current situations that activate stronger reactions. Here is an initial flow for how to work with those memories:

Figure 3. *Initial Flow for Working With Racialized Memories*

RE	Identify your existing practices to REcover in the moment. Tune in to your WOC.
DIS	If none come to mind, try new RE practices to use in the moment from these or other sources: Ogden & Fisher's (2015) sensorimotor psychotherapy strategies, Menakem's (2017; 2022) somatic abolitionism practices, and the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society's (n.d.) practices.
UN	Call to mind a brief racialized memory and notice what happens in your body. Be with your sensations, urges, shifts in breathing, emotions, thoughts about self, and thoughts about others, including urges to suppress or avoid.
RE	Pause, tune in to WOC; try a REcover practice and notice impact. If you are not in your WOC, stay with the practice; if needed, step away and return later.
RE	Tune into your WOC throughout your day and notice your inner experiences.

Create a consistent time to practice working with REcover practices and your awareness of your WOC in your body when you call up racialized memories. It can be helpful to identify someone who is willing to engage in these practices to serve as an accountability partner for support and feedback as you create a larger buffet of choices and develop your ability to be aware of what is going on inside you.

Working With Internalized Dominance and Superiority

Working with internalized dominance and superiority is optimally done with individual practice and in groups of White people who commit to accountability and accompaniment (e.g., White caucuses, affinity groups, accountability spaces; Racial Equity Tools, 2020). Many White people are willing to participate if someone extends an invitation and organizes the group. Similar to other mutual aid groups, members optimally

co-create the structure and culture of the group, including sharing intentions, agreeing on a feedback process for accountability, and making a commitment to meet consistently. Circle practices can guide the co-creation of a culture that provides processes for noticing and pausing when charged moments arise and for noticing and addressing WSC patterns in group interactions (e.g., politeness, right to comfort, not taking up too much space; Circle Way, n.d.; Hanna et al., 2021; Saad, 2020).

The pattern of tuning into one's WOC and using REcover practices as one is UNcovering and DIScovering can then be used to work with the ways White people have internalized and enact dominance and superiority to interrupt and shift habitual reactions. Vinsky and Preyatt-Hyles (2022) used the metaphor of "systemic chatter" to describe the pervasive ways in which dominant cultural sets of practices and ideas influence one's thinking, feeling, inner experiences, and practice actions. Some common thoughts about self that reflect internalized WSC patterns include: "I'm one of the good White people" (Binary thinking); "I'm not like *that* White person" (Superiority); "I'm an ally" or "Oh yeah, I know about that" when one does not know (Individual self-image); "I'm using this great new strategy" without naming the source (exploit BIPOC ideas; Okun, 2021; Saad, 2020). "Doing the work" with these internalized patterns means not only becoming aware of them through UNcover practices, but also using REcover practices to hold space for UNcovering the impact of the expression of those patterns on self and others. REcover practices help metabolize one's reactions about what is UNcovered so one can DIScover how to more genuinely enact anti-oppressive actions (Menakem, 2017, 2022).

DIScover practices can gradually shift internalized dominance and superiority through imagination and experiences. Imagining various scenarios such as showing up with cultural humility and relating in ways that value what people of less organizational status have to say can begin to provide opportunities for fuller expression of one's embodied self. Workplace experiences can also provide opportunities to practice shifting what was UNcovered, such as naming patterns of who tends to speak or what standards are used for decision-making, pausing to listen if one tends to jump in, speaking up if one tends to be silent, and expressing vulnerability or say "I don't know." Shifting into relating with cultural humility can include noticing the impact of one's communication on others or asking for feedback during or after the interaction to see if one's intention aligned with how it was received. It is common to experience activation when trying something for the first time. Tuning into one's body and compassionately working with activations increases one's ability to more accurately perceive what is happening in interactions.

Figure 2 provides some prompts for RE/UN/DIScover practices to use when working with internalized WSC patterns within oneself over time.

Figure 4. *Heuristic Prompts for Working With Self to Expand Self Capacity*

REcover With Compassion

- Tune into your whole self: sensations, thoughts, emotions, inner knowing, actions
- What are you experiencing in your body?
- Try various practices that REcover into, strengthen, and expand window of capacity

UNcover With Curious, Critical Reflection

- What about this situation sparked an activation within me?
- What am I saying about myself? What meaning am I making about this situation?
- How am I using power with self and others? What is the impact?
- Which past patterns are alive in the present that perpetuate White supremacy culture?
- How am I treating myself when my impact is not my intention? When I have a new awareness? When I harm someone with silence, words or actions?

DIScover With Creative Courage

- Create regular meetings with other White people to collectively practice
- Practice shifting from harsh judgment to learning in relationship
- Imagine interactions and experiences of power sharing while being in relationship
- Explore how UNderstandings inform what's needed: what are your learning edges?
- Practice holding space for "not yet being able to" and not knowing
- Try out new REcover practices to use in the moment
- With creative courage, try out new way of seeing, being, or doing and notice impact
- Ask for feedback from trusted others, embrace the learning

As you practice, you are strengthening your capacity to REcover with compassion to your window of capacity and from the reactivity, emotional intensity, distancing and inner "systemic chatter" that activates defensive responses.

From Shame to Guilt With Compassion

    White social workers' efforts to strengthen their capacity can become stalled by shame responses triggered by thoughts such as "I'm a social worker, I should be able to" or "I'm not as 'woke' as I thought." The literature on Whiteness and WSC note how prevalent shame is amongst White people (DiAngelo, 2021; Saad, 2020). WSC expectations for perfectionism, focus on individual identity, and use of binary thinking can elicit shame when a White person micro aggresses, feels discomfort, and remains silent, or acts in ways that reinforce White Supremacy in a group or organization. Shame is a pervasive feeling that one is a bad person and that one's whole self is bad when one has done something wrong or perceived that one has. Shame is experienced as "internal violence of the spirit," and can also be triggered when perceiving threat from others' judgments and verbal attacks (e.g., call out culture; Haga, 2020, p. 197). In contrast, guilt is a feeling of remorse when one does something wrong; it is limited to that specific action. When feeling guilt, people have a sense of themselves as a whole person that is separate yet responsible for the harmful

action. Reactivity from WSC's focus on individual identities and binary thinking fuels these shame-based responses (e.g., "I'm a good person, I don't intentionally cause harm"). Yet, as Saad (2020) noted, the "purpose of this work is not for you to end up living in shame. The purpose is to get you to see the truth so that you can do something about it […] channel those feelings into action and change" (p. 25).

Here is a composite illustration of how some White social workers have engaged in practices to shift their experiences of shame to guilt. The singular pronoun "they" is used for inclusion.

During a case conference with other social workers, a White social worker stated they had frozen and been unable to address the racial microaggressions a White teacher was making about an African American student. On the way out of the meeting, a Puerto Rican social worker said to them: "Why didn't you say something? You should have done better." Ouch. Those words landed in the pit of their stomach as they felt their face flush and had the urge to look down, to turn away, to get away and hide. They couldn't respond to the Puerto Rican social worker who said that and felt themselves oscillating between emotional flooding and numbness.

RE: They went home and wrapped themselves in a fuzzy blanket and rocked for a while. Gradually the oscillations became less dramatic; they were able to look around and orient themselves by looking at familiar pictures and lighting a candle. They went to bed early, deciding to UNcover the next evening.

UN: After work the next day, they started UNcovering with gentle, curious wondering: What's this shame about? What am I expecting of myself? How do I think that person sees me right now? What am I saying about myself to myself?

RE: When wondering about how that person sees them, they immediately got flooded with a wave of shame and felt spacey. They paused, slowed things down, and did some paced breathing to return to the present. They continued to UNcover, tuning in to their WOC as awarenesses surfaced.

UN: They noticed that they felt like a total failure and expected themselves to be able to do better because they had been to a lot of trainings, and they really wanted to make a difference.

RE: As they paused and sat with that awareness and their breathing, memories came to mind.

UN: They realized that these judgments were connected to WSC messages in their family—they were "only lovable if you perform brilliantly and you always work hard." They were surprised that those family messages were linked to their anti-racism work. They realized that they did a weave-and-dodge dance in high school to try to stay in their grandparents' good graces and had never really sorted out how to feel "good enough" in their own eyes. Ugh. Feelings of disappointment and discouragement arose.

RE: This was surfacing much more than they thought. This needed more time. They paused for that night and went for a walk to let the activation and energy move in their body. This slower pace was new but felt right.

DIS: Two nights later they picked this up again. They started imagining what it would feel like to experience guilt instead of shame. They didn't want to make things worse and wanted to figure out how to show up differently. They remembered a few situations with White people where they had messed up and been able to acknowledge it. They took time to be with those memories to feel what that was like in their body, and how that was connected to what they thought about themselves.

RE: They paused and went for another walk.

DIS: As they were walking, they imagined what it would be like to feel guilt and not shame with BIPOC people. They played out various situations where they would mess up or not be able to process as quickly as they wanted, and just sat with what that felt like in their body.

RE: Walking helped the sensations and emotions flow. They focused on their exhalations.

DIS: They started hearing some possible things they could say to themselves: "I am learning how to take risks," "I'm learning with others who have more capacity than I do right now," "I'm feeling vulnerable and missed the mark and I'm still here," "I'm sorry, I will do better."

They started wanting to talk about this shift with a couple of other White people that they admire. They got together and talked to learn more about their inner experiences in similar situations, and how they became able to respond in the moment without shame.

After a few more days they started having more possibilities come into awareness in the form of "I could haves" which they used to rehearse/replay/prepare for next opportunity.

RE: They monitored their WOC and kept trying and failing forward as they practiced working with inner sensations and activations to shame.

Shortly thereafter, they asked to meet with the person who made that comment. They said to the person: "Yes, I should have done better, and I didn't. Thank you for telling me how that affected you. I am sorry. I've been working on it. I'm going to stay at it."

One can use the heuristic to DIScover ways of working with one's own moments of causing harm. After UNcovering the internal "systemic chatter," you can tune into your WOC and use REcover practices to be present with what you have noticed. This can lead to DIScovering what it feels like to bring humility to moments where you have harmed. With creative courage, these moments can be contextualized within your full self as someone who can be loving, helpful, *and* hurtful. Taking time to hold space with compassion for the people you have harmed and yourself can broaden one's focus. DIScovering ways to be more present and do better in the next similar situation can increase

the likelihood of responding relationally when those moments happen. It can also be helpful to continue practicing with other White people to strengthen your capacity to hold space for owning your impact, remaining in or moving back into one's WOC, and trying new ways of responding in future interactions (Frey et al., 2021).

Focus on Being With Self in Everyday Moments

Although focusing on self in spaces that provide time for slow, intentional practice expands one's capacity to be more fully present with inner experiences in racialized moments, White people also need to expand capacity to bring that presence to momentary interactions. Similar to social work practice, this involves cultivating a dual awareness of what is going on within one's body and what is taking place with others in a specific situation, of simultaneous attention to inner and outer experiences. With ongoing practice, one can become more and more able to tune into one's inner experiences during meetings and gatherings and with emails, texts, and social media—attending to the how as much as the what. The prompts in Figure 3 can be used to guide one's thinking and actions with dual awareness of self and a practice moment in the moment and over time.

Figure 5. *Heuristic Prompts for Dual Awareness of Self and Practice Moment*

REcover with Compassion:

- Tune into your body: Identify urges, emotional reactions, defensiveness to UNcover later
- Hold space for inner activations and use in the moment REcover practices
- Create time to be in relationship with people doing anti-racist work

UNcover with Curious, Critical Reflection:

- How are you using power within this situation? What is the impact?
- How are others using power? In what ways (power over, power with)? What are the impacts?
- Patterns of power in meetings: Who talks? Who decides? Who's included? In what way and how meaningfully?
- How are you and others experiencing your work together? What does it mean to each of you? What's at stake?

DIScover with Creative Courage:

- In conversation with others imagine: What does White people supporting and amplifying BIPOC look like in this group, in this situation?
- Briefly say when you do not know or do not know how to do something
- Use clear communication (state your thoughts, ask questions, and listen to others)
- Recognize how WSC shows up in this group - notice impacts and talk with BIPOC group members
- Practice interrupting or resisting WSC processes and notice impact (see something, say something)
- Engage in agreements of who will do what (give and receive) in interdependent relationships
- Ask for feedback; use learning to inform next conversations and actions

As White social workers become able to ignore WSC pulls for superiority and perfectionism, they can take individual responsibility with courage and humility to contribute to collective anti-racist actions.

Using Dual Awareness With Habitual Not Seeing

One of the advantages of being a member of the dominant group in WSC means that White people can move through their days as individual people without seeing the group-level patterns of power continuously reinforcing this dominance. Although many White people seek to dismantle White supremacy, there are few negative consequences for not seeing and addressing WSC in one's family, workplace, and neighborhood. In addition, the stressors of everyday living often pull well-intentioned White people away from conscious awareness and action until the next "horrific" incident occurs because WSC actively encourages emotional detachment and desensitization to violence (Ricketts, 2021). WSC perpetuates "a kind of numbness—a numbness of empathy, a numbness to human interconnection" and a failure to see "tiny moments of violence" (Morgan, 2022, as cited in Bouie, 2022, para. 50).

In addition to expanding capacity to address activations out of one's WOC, White social workers also need to awaken from numbness with the forms of racism one does not yet consistently recognize. This can be done by UNcovering areas you tend to notice already. Combining selections across these categories can provide a multifaceted view:

- *Ecological levels:* intrapersonal, interpersonal, group, organization, community, structural
- *Groups of people:* clients, colleagues, administrators, community members, family, friends
- *Situations:* policies, procedures, meetings, informal conversations, written communications
- *Types of racism:* microaggressions, discrimination, structural processes, systemic violence

Next, you can reflect on what you did not select. Are there any patterns that emerge? Working with one area or pattern at a time can help you to become more consistently aware of what you have not typically seen. After selecting the area or pattern, creating reminders, prompts, and habits can spark noticing and being present with fresh eyes throughout your day. UNcover resources and the heuristic prompts in Figure 2 can also guide your efforts to see more broadly (see, for example, DiAngelo, 2021; dRworks, 2021; Kivel, 2007; McCoy, 2020; Saad, 2020; Vinsky & Prevatt-Hyles, 2022; Yosso, 2005).

The noticings from your habitual awareness practice can be processed alone and with others, as you UNcover patterns of power and do more work with self. This includes continuing to notice how one is treating oneself while working with the new awareness, and drawing on REcover practices to support holistic engagement. DIScover practices with others can provide various ways of using power to support flourishing for BIPOC or interrupt or resist WSC. Cultivating dual awareness of oneself in specific situations while practicing intentional seeing and being with others can become increasingly possible with

practice and feedback from others. The prompts in Figure 3 can be used as a guide as you practice dual awareness of yourself and others in specific situations.

Using Dual Awareness With in-the-Moment Activation

As a reminder, working with activations starts with expecting that White bodies are going to be activated to create a habit of noticing and metabolizing the impact when it occurs. Rather than impulsively reacting, metabolizing happens by linking awareness of one's inner sensations with somatic responses to allow the intensity to diminish (e.g., use of touch on one's palms or face, rocking back and forth, or vigorous movements). Over time, one also can become familiar with one's activation tendencies (e.g., shifts in breathing, muscle constriction, dissociating, racing thoughts, urges to fix, take charge, hide, or leave; intense feelings of anger, sadness, fear; Menakem, 2017, 2022).

When activated, one can use in-the-moment REcover practices to remain present in a situation: taking a brief pause; engaging in abdominal, square, or paced breathing; orienting self to one's space; touching one's palm, thigh, arm, or face; engaging in gentle rocking and other movements; and imagining people or pets behind or next to one for support (Menakem, 2017; Ogden & Fisher, 2015).

If possible, it is helpful to notice any "shoulds," harsh judgments, and "systemic chatter" to UNcover later. If you are feeling flooded and unable to remain present in the situation, you can send a message to others to let them know that you need to step away and will be back. Stepping out of the room or away from an online meeting can provide the space for REcover practices to decrease the likelihood of reactivity so one can rejoin the situation in one's WOC.

White people have a role to play in anti-racism work. That includes taking responsibility for one's impact and communicating what one can and cannot do in specific situations so one's reactivity does not get inflicted on others through avoidance and denial (Menakem, 2017). With practice, it is possible to expand capacity to REcover in the moment in others' presence.

Composite Illustration

Here's a composite of a few university and community groups illustrating how the heuristic informed actions of White social workers as they collaborate with BIPOC and White colleagues and community members.

A multiracial group has been working for racial justice in predominantly White spaces for a few years. This group has organized protests, facilitated educational events, and lobbied for policy changes regarding multiple issues, including anti-Black violence, equitable workload distribution, healthcare discrimination, and equitable access to higher education. White people in the group have participated in learning about racism and White supremacy, expanding their understanding of microaggressions, discrimination, and systemic racism. This group has also begun to work more intentionally towards becoming an anti-racist group/organization.

People in the group know each other and are in relationship with each other in varying ways. Some have close friendships, some have met with each other for a conversation to get to know each other, and some have familiarity from participation in multiple meetings together. The group has tended to be outward facing (i.e., the group came together out of a shared purpose to work for racial justice in predominately White spaces).

Challenges have recently arisen regarding how the work was being done. Who was leading? How did people assume leadership positions? How are new people invited and brought into the group? These questions started a ripple of UNcover awareness and uncertainty about what had not been attended to. The emotional intensity was heightened by a couple of incidents of harm in the larger predominantly White space, coupled with White people's urges to fix, that caused further harm to BIPOC members who were already engaging in various forms of self-protection.

White social workers met to hold space for their inner experiences, to UNcover connections to WSC, and to DIScover how they could show up in less harmful ways in the group. Slow, intentional critical reflection with curiosity surfaced awareness of how sexism and heterosexism were clouding their ability to see the impact of their use of power as White people. They began to see how this showed up in meetings: they jumped in to talk and ask questions, and they felt an urge to focus on one or two White people in the predominantly White space who were doing or accused of doing harm while not seeing how their "White moves" were also negatively impacting BIPOC members. They took time to collectively pause, and use REcover practices to hold space for those urges to see how they have participated in power over patterns within the group. They turned to patterns that BIPOC people identified to UNcover patterns they had not been aware of (e.g., Menakem, 2022; Okun, 2021; Saad, 2020).

Some participants also did individual UNcovering to identify the connections to familial patterns or other social identities that were being activated now. REcover practices were used to hold space for what each was sensing in their bodies. This was a painful process, because these individuals had been invested in racial justice actions for years and viewed themselves as some of the "good ones" who were helpful and caring (aka, "nice"; DiAngelo, 2021). A few took time to work with their feelings of "badness," others practiced slowing down and holding space for their urgency to make things "right" so they would feel more "comfortable," and a few became aware that their ethnic cultural practices of jumping in or talking over others were causing harm in multiracial group conversations.

The larger group is still working with the tensions and impact of harm in an intentional way. The ongoing work for White people focuses on de-centering WSC patterns and trying to co-create embodied relational patterns with BIPOC members. This includes being able to hold space within themselves to receive feedback and to use DIScover practices to express care by listening, pausing, asking more questions, limiting sharing of their ideas and opinions, and holding space for the inner experience of new efforts. In addition, some White group members want to do follow-up work to address low levels of anxiety and fear that their new ways of being will be met with judgments, including "you're still doing it" or "you need to do better."

Meeting as a White affinity group can support REcovering, holding space to UNcover what these fears are linked to, and DIScovering how to bring courage and humility into trying anyway. Expectations for perfection and harsh judgments are often activated in these moments and then projected onto BIPOC people. These fears also make it likely that feedback would be perceived as harsh judgments rather than information about their impact. Ongoing meetings to practice how to bring compassion to one's efforts, to hold space for the vulnerability one feels when responding in new ways, and to rehearse holding space for one's inner experience when asking for and receiving feedback can expand one's capacity to be more fully present.

The RE/UN/DIScover heuristic offers practices for working with one's activations and for responding to everyday interactions when engaged in work to dismantle White supremacy ideology and culture. By engaging in these practices over time, White social workers can DIScover and consistently draw on REcover practices that settle themselves, UNcover response tendencies that negatively impact self and others, and DIScover ways of being that express respect and fuel relational connection. These efforts strengthen one's capacity to be more fully present and flexibly respond when working with others to co-create anti-racist White culture.

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Author note: Address correspondence to Elizabeth King Keenan, Department of Social Work, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, CT, 06515. Email: keenane1@southernct.edu