

## Brap – Partos racialised identity affinity groups on anti-racism: a note on language

*Claiming our identity is an act of resistance against racism, and any term that attempts to describe a whole group of people from within the construct of race is inherently problematic. Whatever term we use will not land well with everyone. We know however, that race is an idea – not a fact and use the term ‘racialised’ or racialisation – to express the belief that race is something that is ‘done’ to marginalised individuals. We also use the terms Black, Brown and White because we know that physical characteristics continue to confer inferiority and superiority within the system of racism.*

Yet, identifying your own racialized identity may be something new and uncomfortable. To support your process of self-identifying for affinity group work, we offer:

- **white, or white-presenting:** individuals who do not face racialised harm, marginalisation or exclusion. Those who are privileged within the socially constructed system of race: who face no systemic or structural disadvantage by reason of racialisation or skin colour.
- **Global majority:** we use this term to describe communities and individuals who are racialised as Black, or Brown or people of colour. This group encompasses billions of people and countless different groups, who are racialised as outside of whiteness and thus face harm, marginalisation or exclusion by reason of skin colour or ethnicity within colonial and former colonial states. This includes indigenous communities who have been racialised and faced discrimination.

### ***What about individuals of mixed heritage?***

One of the values we stand for is self-identification, and that includes for affinity group work. Think also about how the world receives you, and whether that experience has ever included being racialised or ‘othered’ by reason of skin colour, or ethnicity.

### ***What about white ethnic minorities?***

- Categorising populations as inherently flawed/dangerous based on their ethnicity has de-humanised some groups, for others’ benefit. People of colour, as well as e.g. Gypsy, Roma, Traveller people and Jewish people can be racialised and face racism.
- However, racialised populations that are ‘white presenting’ will also in certain contexts experience the ‘benefits’ (or lack of impediment) associated with whiteness. This ‘choice’ is not available to those racialised as people of colour.

We thus invite anyone whose experience is of being white, to join the white affinity group, and to bring their nuanced experience of also being minoritised, to our discussions.

## brap's anti-racist principles

These principles are deliberate in their attempt to liberate us all from the racialised dynamics which keep racism in play.

1. **Racialised thinking leads to racialised outcomes.** Race is an idea to be dismantled. So long as the idea is present in our worldview, it remakes itself. And we are all of us - to a greater or lesser extent - socialised into a structurally racist world. So all of us have work to do.
2. **Examine the un-examined norm.** Racism hides in plain sight because what should have our attention and focus in race equity work (but rarely does) are the everyday unexamined norms that maintain systems of whiteness and racial hierarchy. Anti-racism makes these unexamined norms visible.
3. **Mobilise White people.** Anti-racism actively invites White people into the work with an acknowledgment of the particular role they have to play dismantling race and racism. Indeed, anti-racism values coalition building as a way of overcoming the divisions created by processes of racialisation and oppression, including the competition (for resources and visibility) sown between different marginalised groups.
4. **Reflection for People of Colour.** The work of anti-racism must also be an active intrapersonal process for those who are racialised, because anti-racism recognises all of us will involuntarily adopt beliefs, thinking and patterns of behaviour that reproduce racialised norms and systems of Whiteness.
5. **Challenge systemic patterns of oppression.** One of the reasons racism endures is because organisations expend a lot of effort reducing it to inter-personal behaviour and adopting crude technical fixes that don't draw on evidence. Anti-racism is committed to addressing systemic racism and exposing the wider context and patterns of racism that play out in organisational life. It is focused on root causes and recognises that initiatives aimed at symptomatic issues (such as representation) will not in themselves solve the problem of systemic racism.
6. **Adopt a complexity mindset.** Racism is a 'wicked' issue; intractable, complex and dynamic. Like any complex problem facing the system, making progress on it requires an ability and willingness to avoid binary and reductive thinking, simplistic toolkits, and tick-box projects. Anti-racism requires a more radical spirit of collaboration, experimentation, and learning.
7. **Make power explicit and visible.** Ultimately anti-racism is interested in power; the way it is constituted in organisational life and administered systemically through cultural norms, technical processes and human relationships. Re-distributing and using power well is at the heart of anti-racism, and it's grounded in the fundamental belief that power is not an object or finite resource to possess and hoard. For anti-racists, power multiplies the better and more it is distributed – no-one loses if everyone wins.