

Pilot Racial Justice Framework

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Jewish Social Justice Roundtable has created this pilot Racial Justice Framework to help guide and support our collective efforts around racial justice. This framework is a tool to help build the capacities of Jewish organizations to be more racially and ethnically diverse, inclusive, equitable and just.¹

1. BUILDING ON OUR STRENGTHS

MECHAYIL EL CHAYIL (FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH) - מחיל אל-חיל

Our organizations are staffed with smart, capable and committed leaders. Our organizations also have many accomplishments under our belts. We have everything we need to do the work of racial justice. We just need more practice to build our confidence. Advancing racial diversity, equity and inclusion is an adaptive challenge we are equipped to take on with patience and increasing self-assuredness as we go.

2. WE COUNTER ISOLATION

BRIT (PARTNERSHIP) - ברית

Collective challenges require collective solutions. Impactful racial justice work can be difficult. It is much less so when we reach out and ask for help, and are mindful of who we are asking. This work is not meant to be done alone. We need each other.

3. JOY AND FUN!

SIMCHA (JOY) - שמחה

As Viktor Frankl beautifully articulated in *Man's Search for Meaning*, we always have the power to choose how we orient ourselves to any situation with which we are faced. Given the heavy and challenging nature of racism, it is helpful and productive to intentionally incorporate joy and fun into our work so that it's sustainable and keeps our vision focused on a brighter future.

4. BOTH/AND FRAMEWORK

ELU V'ELU (BOTH/AND) - אלו ואלו

We live in a complex, multi-dimensional world that requires adaptive leadership, specifically the ability to understand that multiple priorities and seemingly conflicting truths can exist simultaneously. We need smart, flexible solutions to navigate and properly address them. For example, Jews, like some other groups, can be both targets of oppression and play the role of oppressor, depending on the context.

5. WE ALL BELONG AND ARE VALUABLE LEADERS IN THIS WORK

HISHTARSHUT (ROOTED/GROUNDED) - השתרשות

We all have a stake and rightful place in the important work of racial justice. And we each have different work to do based upon our position (e.g. social status, identity).

¹This is a pilot framework that will evolve as the network of Jewish Social Justice Roundtable organizations use it, learn and adapt. This pilot framework was created by April Baskin and inspired by the Religious Action Center's Reflect-Relate-Reform framework, created by Joy Friedman. (Last updated on February 1, 2021)

6. ACKNOWLEDGING AND HONORING OUR MISTAKES AND PAIN POINTS

SHEVIRAH (BROKENNESS) - שבירה

Racial equity work is often non-linear, relational, messy, and involves making mistakes, and then correcting and learning from them. Do not let the fear of making mistakes keep you from moving forward. Rather, consider them growing pains and milestones that are part of the process of striving toward justice and equity.

7. COMPASSIONATE ACCOUNTABILITY

CHESED V'ACHRAYUT (LOVINGKINDNESS AND RESPONSIBILITY) - חסד ואחריות

We understand that antisemitism and intergenerational trauma have made it harder at times for Jews to be included in or effectively navigate these conversations, which is never discounted nor forgotten. That deserves profound attention and healing. At the same time, these cannot be used as an excuse to ignore that racism still needs to be eradicated nor overlook the racism that our community is complicit in perpetuating.

8. AN IMPERATIVE TO CORRECT WRONGDOING

TESHUVA V'TIKKUN (TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR IMPACT AND REPAIRING) - תשובה ותיקון

It is very important to note that in this work we understand that people are fundamentally good. That said, behaviors, biases, policies and practices can be bad or problematic and require correction and *tikkun* (repairing). This is another example of the both/and, *elu v'elu*, principle.

9. REMAIN ENGAGED AND CURIOUS

NA'ASEH V'NISHMAH ("WE WILL DO AND WE WILL UNDERSTAND" - LEARN BY DOING) - נעשה ונשמע

When the path isn't clear, that can be a sign that you're growing. When something feels hard or impossible, it can be tempting to check out or quit. Get curious instead. Ask questions. Stay engaged. The feeling of discomfort is temporary and will dissipate as you learn more and strengthen your skills.

10. FAITHFUL ACTION & COMMITMENT

EMUNAH (FAITH OR STEADFAST BELIEF) - אמונה

The progress of our racial justice work depends on how much *emunah* we cultivate and maintain. Beginning to learn or engage in the work isn't enough. We need to embody *emunah* — commitment that is grounded in steadfast faith. Our collective efforts will be stronger when we replace hesitation or caution with faithful commitment to ourselves, our communities and the catalytic importance of racial justice. Cultivating *emunah* can bolster the sustainability of our racial justice work over the long haul.

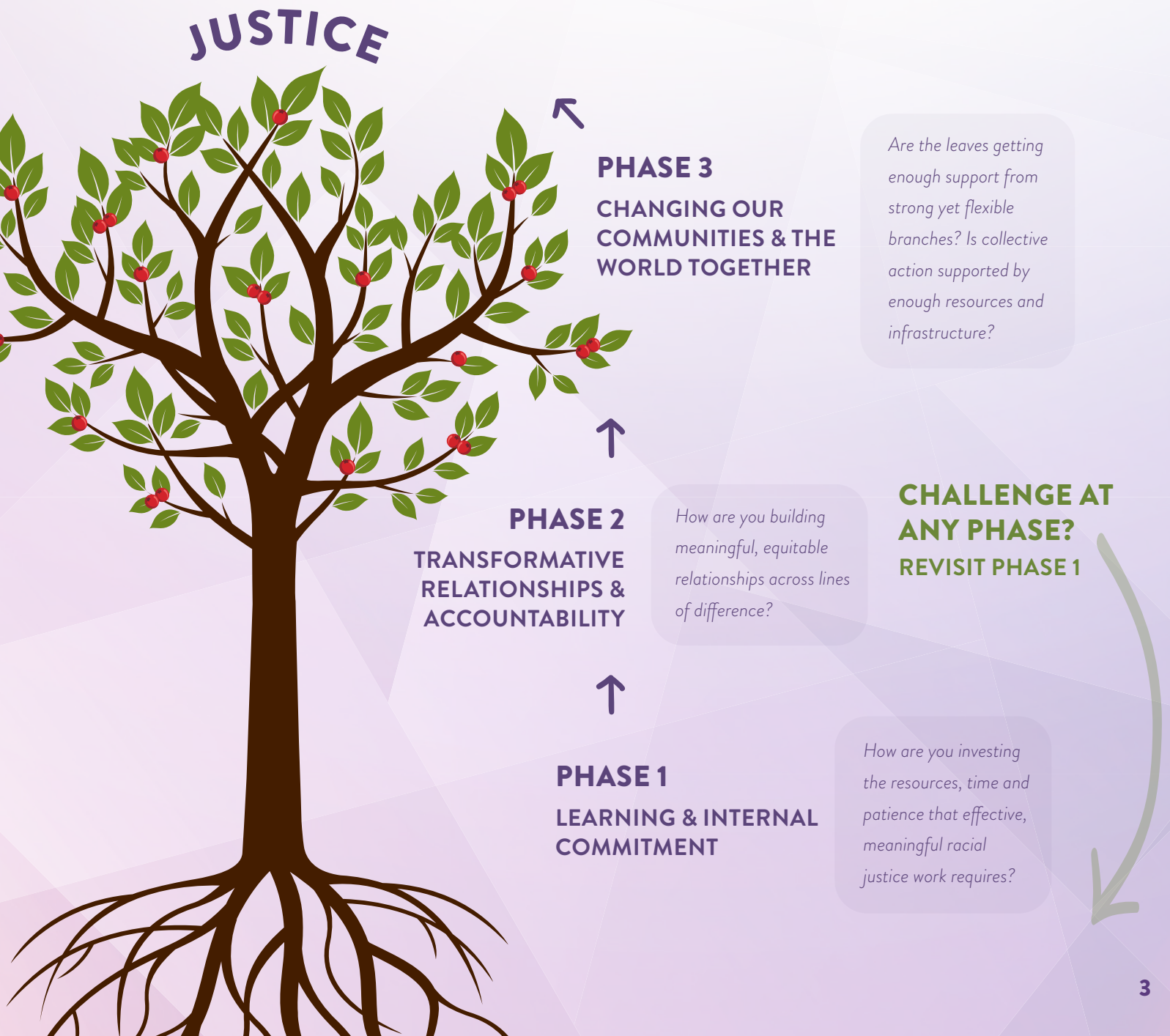
I sometimes visualize the ongoing cycle of racism as a moving walkway at the airport. Active racist behavior is equivalent to walking fast on the conveyor belt...

Passive racist behavior is equivalent to standing still on the walkway. No overt effort is being made, but the conveyor belt moves the bystanders along to the same destination as those who are actively walking.

Some of the bystanders may feel the motion of the conveyor belt, see the active racists ahead of them, and choose to turn around...But unless they are walking actively in the opposite direction at a speed faster than the conveyor belt — unless they are actively anti-racist — they will find themselves carried along with the others.

- Beverly Tatum

Core Racial Justice Framework



PHASE 1

LEARNING & INTERNAL COMMITMENT

(Individual & Organizational)

I AM OPEN AND I AM WILLING. FOR TO BE HOPELESS WOULD SEEM SO STRANGE.
IT DISHONORS THOSE WHO CAME BEFORE US. SO LIFT ME UP
TO THE LIGHT OF CHANGE.

- Holly Near

STOP

Pick a racial justice issue that needs to be addressed within your organization and/or yourself.

Acknowledge the issue or challenge. Reflect. Learn.

PILOT

Apply the learning by setting a related racial justice **intention or goal that is supported by:**

- Skill-building
- Ongoing reflection, learning and iterating
- Supportive intra-racial relationships
(white folks supporting white folks, people of color supporting people of color)

ACT

Formally commit and continue to take action toward your racial justice intention or goal.

Celebrate success! Continually repeat this process, increasingly building more racial justice momentum within your organization and yourself.

Guiding Questions

Powerful, sustained racial justice work requires individual and organizational reflection and awareness.

- How are you investing the resources, time, and patience that effective, meaningful racial justice work requires?
- Tall, robust trees are sustained by well-nourished, multi-faceted roots that are both deep and wide. How deep and wide is your organizational and individual racial justice learning, commitment and integration?

Phases 2 and 3 are impacted most significantly by the health, vitality and on-going investment in Phase 1.

PHASE 2

TRANSFORMATIVE RELATIONSHIPS & ACCOUNTABILITY

(Enduring & Across Lines of Difference)

“ WE ARE MOVING IN WIDER CIRCLES. WE ARE OPENING OUR CIRCLES. ”

- Rising Appalachia

Now that you have experience with reflecting, learning, skill-building and pro-active anti-racist action, invest significant time and energy in accountable, fun!, transformative relationships across racial/ethnic lines.

As you build these relationships, consider:

1. To whom are you accountable?
2. How are you investing in relationships with partner organizations in the social change or social justice worlds?
3. As you partner with leaders directly impacted by injustices, how can those relationships be fundamental to how your organization makes decisions?
4. How can you anticipate, acknowledge and appropriately address your biases and persistent oppressive patterns?

Guiding Questions

The strength of your racial justice work will depend in large part on the extent and strength of relationships within racial groups and across lines of difference.

- How can you develop capacities to build and maintain transformative, anti-oppressive relationships?
- How are you building meaningful, equitable relationships across lines of difference?

One person's perspective, no matter how strategic or informed, cannot be enough for the adaptive challenges of advancing racial justice. Robust relationships and partnerships are necessary to develop, strengthen and elevate our collective perspectives and strategies.

PHASE 3

CHANGING OUR COMMUNITIES & THE WORLD TOGETHER

(Equitable, Multiracial Collective Action)

“ WE HAVE EVERYTHING WE NEED TO DO THIS WORK...
AND WIN.

- Koach Baruch Frazier

Guiding Questions

If the roots and trunk are robust and healthy, the leaves largely take care of themselves. If the leaves and fruit are not healthy, return to the trunk and roots. Examine them for malnourishment, illness or problematic patterns and adjust.

- Are the leaves getting enough support from strong yet flexible branches? Is the collective action supported by enough resources and infrastructure?
- Is your collective action in a season of vibrancy or a period of rest and letting go? Regardless, the roots and trunk require consistent tending and care, so that when it's time for the work to resume, your system is well-resourced and equipped to grow new leaves.

Examples of Phase 3 action may include pursuing justice with a racial equity lens on issues such as:

- Further advancing racial equity within Jewish life
- Publicly taking on white supremacy with a strong analysis of both racism and antisemitism
- Criminal justice reform
- Immigration reform
- Working to address health disparities, including reproductive health, rights and justice
- Police brutality
- Reparations
- Increasing affordable housing
- Educational equity work, e.g. accessible, high-quality child care
- Good jobs with a living wage