Assumptions

Purpose: to strengthen our container, we put out a set of assumptions previously used by Beverly Daniel Tatum in her “Learning About Racism” course. Securing agreement on these assumptions is important to reinforce the container with shared understanding and shared definitions.

1. Racism - A system of advantage based on race.

2. Prejudice - Preconceived judgment or opinion, often based on limited information.

3. In U.S. society, the system of advantage operates to benefit Whites as a group, but racism, like all forms of oppression, hurts everyone.

4. Because of the prejudice and racism in our environment when we are children, we cannot be blamed for learning what we were taught (intentionally or unintentionally). Yet now that we are grown, we have the responsibility to identify, interrupt and change the cycle. When we recognize that we are misinformed we have a responsibility to get accurate information and adjust our behavior.

5. Each of us is at a different place in the journey and we will have mutual respect regardless of where we perceive each other to be.

6. Change is possible both individually and institutionally.

Beverly Daniel Tatum, Learning About Racism, 1992