

Modern Racism, Valerie Batts

See <http://www.visions-inc.org/Is%20Reconciliation%20Possible.pdf>

(Page 5 has a chart describing a variety of oppressions rooted in prejudice.)

Modern racism has been defined as “the expression in terms of abstract ideological symbols and symbolic behaviors of the feeling that blacks are violating cherished values and making illegitimate demands for change in the racial status quo.”

- I. Expressions of Modern Racism
 - a. Personal: prejudice or bias, conscious or unconscious attitudes and feelings that whites are superior and that blacks or other people of color are inferior. The misinformation can be learned directly or indirectly through observation.
 - b. Interpersonal: Through cross-cultural interactions individuals discover subtle racist behaviors within themselves or others.
 - c. Institutional: The intended or unintended consequences of policies, practices, laws, styles, rules, and procedures function to the advantage of the dominant group and to the disadvantage of people of color.
 - d. Cultural: defining European-American and Western cultural preferences as what is deemed as “right and beautiful.” Expecting others to fit into those cultural parameters.

- II. Behavioral Manifestations of Modern Racism
 - a. Dysfunctional Rescuing: helping people of color based on an assumption that they cannot help themselves, setting them up to fail; being patronizing or condescending. Help that does not help.
 - b. Blaming the Victim: Attributing the results of systemic oppression to the target group; ignoring the real impact of racism on the lives of people of color. Accepting little or no responsibility for current inequities and putting all the responsibility on the target group members.
 - c. Avoidance of Contact: not having social or professional contact with people of color; making no effort to learn about life in communities of color; living in all white communities.
 - d. Denial of Cultural Differences: minimizing obvious physical or behavioral differences between people as well as difference in preferences that may be rooted in culture; being “color blind” in a way that masks discomfort with differences.

- III. Behavioral Manifestations of Internalized Oppression
 - a. System Beating: attempting to get over or around the system; manipulating others or the system through guilt, psychological games, or illicit behavior; acting out of anger, playing dumb, being invisible. An underlying belief that the target group cannot succeed by being herself or himself. It may also take the form of using anger or hostility to manipulate whites

- b. Blaming the System: deflecting responsibility for one's actions; putting all the blame on others or the system for one's problems; or refusing to acknowledge mental, emotional, and stress related issues as real. This can mask a sense of hopelessness in the target group's ability to visualize and/or implement a more desirable system.
- c. Anti-white Avoidance of Contact: avoiding contact with whites, distrusting whites; being overtly sensitive to rejection; rejecting people of color who are perceived as "not black enough." Such a stance can be destructive to the person who carries it.
- d. Denial of Cultural Heritage: distrusting one's own group, accepting that one group is inferior, giving deference to whites; rejecting or devaluing one's cultural heritage; valuing or over-emphasizing white standards of beauty; valuing and accepting whites as the highest authority and white standards as superior.
- e. Lack of Understanding or minimization of the political significance or racial oppression: being passive, unassertive, feeling powerless, misdirecting anger to persons with less power; avoiding conflict at all costs, turning anger inward resulting in high blood pressure, strokes, ulcers, in-group fighting, taking advantage of the lack of information or feelings of powerlessness of other people of color.