

Norms that Impede Community Engagement

White supremacy norm	Description
Paternalism	No consultation or transparency in decision making. Taking over campaigns, mediating and facilitating others.
Comfort with white leadership	Defaulting to all or mostly white leadership using urgency and lack of available, qualified, people of color as justifications for doing so.
Fear of Open Conflict	Right to comfort. Politeness is valued over honesty. White fragility goes unchecked. Those who bring up discomfort for others are scapegoated. Useful feedback is not given in a timely manner resulting in underperformance, lack of growth, distorted sense of how one is doing. Smaller problems left unattended become bigger ones down the road.
Priorities and timelines that perpetuate white supremacy culture	Sense of urgency for funder driven deliverables but not for community building, capacity building work or equity work implementation.
Superiority of the written word	If it's not written down it is not valued. If it's written down in any way other than Standard American English it is seen as incorrect or less intelligent. Superiors correct, edit, and change documents to reflect a particular normalized language for that organization.
Transactional relationships	Detached professional communication for the purpose of completing a transaction and efficiency. Reaching out or acknowledging people only when you need something from them.
Defensiveness	Nowhere to air grievances. Focus placed on protecting power instead of addressing harms. Naming intention instead of acknowledging impact.
Equity Washing	Signing on to big lofty values but not enacting them. Hiring people of color but not supporting a culture shift to retain them. Focusing on inclusion internally while the field work perpetuates inequities.
Perfectionism	Mistakes are seen as personal, reflect badly on the person - the person is seen as a mistake. Little time for learning.