

A photograph of three men in a meeting. A Black man with glasses and a beard is in the center, holding a tablet and looking at it. To his left is a white man with grey hair and glasses, looking towards the tablet. To his right is a white man with a beard, looking at the tablet. They are all wearing light blue button-down shirts. The background is a blurred office space with large windows. An orange diagonal overlay covers the left side of the image, containing the title text.

Beyond Awareness: Moving from Fear to Action in Racial Equity

Moving from Fear to Action in Racial Equity

Racial equity work can feel overwhelming, but **understanding race as a system** allows us to step into action with confidence. This session explores how fear can hold us back, how agency allows us to create change, and how we can apply the **Fear-Agency-Action Model** to workplace scenarios.

Objectives

Build knowledge & understanding - How does race function, and why does racism persist?

Explore barriers to racial equity work - What holds us back from taking action?

Identify what each of us can do - How do we create impact at an individual and organisational level?

Building Knowledge - Race Isn't Real, But Racism Is

- Race is a social construct - it has no biological basis.
- But racism is very real, shaping policies, institutions, and daily experiences. Because racism is systemic, dismantling it requires intentional action.

Barriers to Racial Equity Work

1. Emotions: Fear, Guilt, and Discomfort

- Emotions are often the biggest blockers to racial equity work.
- Fear of getting it wrong, guilt over privilege, or discomfort in difficult conversations can cause us to avoid engagement altogether.
- Emotions are not good or bad, they are signals.
- Learning to recognise, regulate, and move through them is key to stepping into action with confidence and accountability.

2. Lack of Agency: "Do I Even Have Influence?"

- Many people hesitate because they don't see where they have power - believing that racial equity work is for HR, leadership, or DEI experts.
- But systems are made up of individual choices, and every role has influence - whether in hiring, decision-making, or shaping workplace culture.
- Recognising our own agency - even in small actions - allows us to stop waiting for change and start driving it.

The Fear-Agency-Action Model

The Fear-Agency-Action Model helps us recognise where we stand and provides a framework for shifting from hesitation to meaningful action.

The model is built on two key dimensions:

- 1 - Fear: How afraid someone (or an organisation) is of engaging with racial equity work.
- 2 - Agency: How much power and willingness someone (or an organisation) has to take meaningful action

When we map these two dimensions, we get four distinct responses:

Turtle Avoidant Observer (High Fear, Low Agency) – “I’d rather not engage.”

Sloth Passive Bystander (Low Fear, Low Agency) – “Not my problem.”

Rabbit Cautious Advocate (High Fear, High Agency) – “I want to act, but I’m scared to get it wrong.”

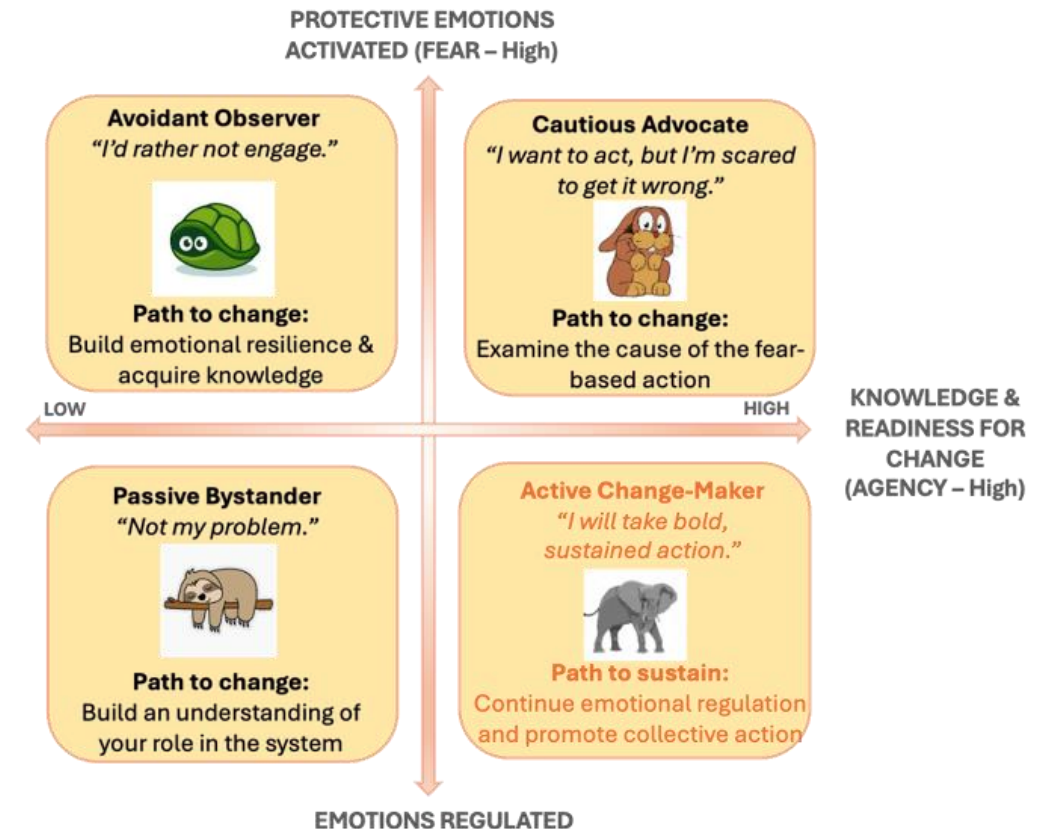
Elephant Active Change-Maker (Low Fear, High Agency) – “I will take bold, sustained action.”

Invitation for reflection

Where do you see yourself?

What's holding you in that space?

Where do you want to be and what might help you to move there?



FEAR - AGENCY - ACTION MODEL: © Raising Racial Consciousness Ltd (2024)

Key Takeaways

- Barriers exist, but they can be overcome – Fear, guilt, or uncertainty are common, but they don't have to stop us from engaging.
- Knowledge builds confidence – Understanding how race and racism function allows us to act with greater clarity and purpose.
- Every decision matters – Workplace culture is shaped by you - through every decision, every action, and every moment you choose to challenge what is 'normal'.
- The question isn't 'Will I make a difference?' - it's....

**'How will I use
my agency to
create change?'**

