**TRIGGER TERM**

White Fragility

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **HARMFUL DETOUR** | **HEALING REDIRECT** |
| “White fragility” implies that white individuals are – as a group – emotionally weaker than people of other races, which is an offensive overgeneralization and an example of “reverse racism.” | “White fragility” represents the behaviors and emotional processes – often performed unwittingly – by which white individuals suppress and deflect the stress of facing their own racial identity and position of societal advantage. Though white individuals frequently experience shame, defensiveness, anger and other negative emotions when motivated by white fragility, the root of those emotions comes from a place of social entitlement and power, not moral or biological weakness. By refusing to accept whiteness as a meaningful social construct, white individuals defend the status quo of structural racism, which allows them to benefit from white privilege without addressing the systemic inequity that underpins it. |
| I am white but I am “woke.” I do not feel shame or anger when I am confronted with my position of white privilege, so “white fragility” does not apply to me. | Although white individuals can, and should, actively build their stamina and progress with uprooting personal biases and internalized racism, that work is a lifelong process. White fragility cannot be outgrown because it is more than personal. Like the structural racism it props up, white fragility is a complex social force that operates systemically – often invisibly – and not just in the discrete actions of individuals. |