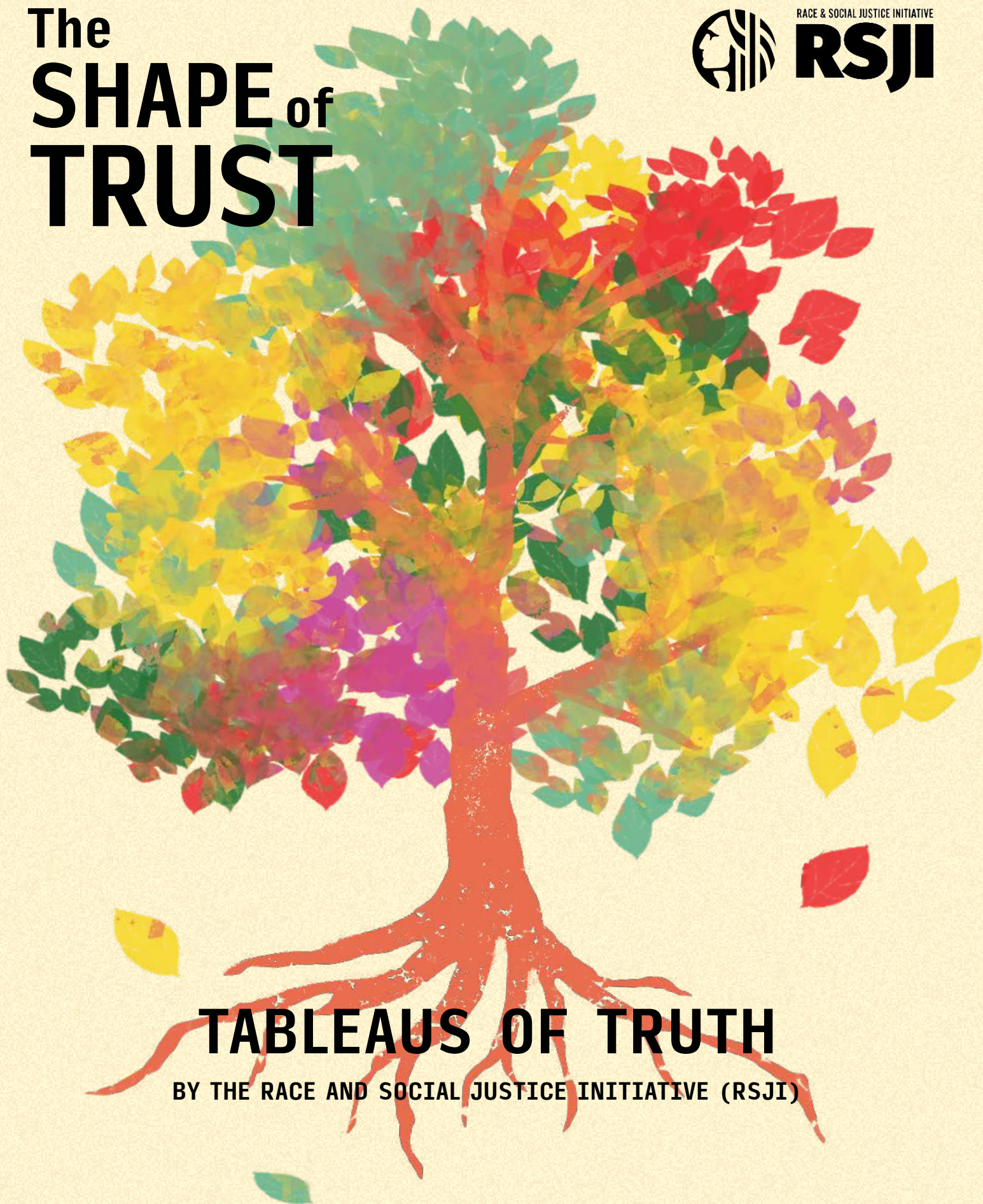


# The **SHAPE** of **TRUST**



RACE & SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE

**RSJI**



## **TABLEAUS OF TRUTH**

BY THE RACE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVE (RSJI)





# WHAT

An in-person activity in which small groups collaborate to physically embody and convey the meaning of the [RSJI Truths](#). Groups then reflect on the creative experience, including shared decision-making and expressing meaning through the configuration and movement of their bodies.

## Number of Participants

8–35.

## Time

**75 minutes.** Timing for each step is flexible, based on the needs of the group and overall facilitation plan. Some suggestions are provided. Total time will depend on format (in-person, virtual, or hybrid), number of participants, and other factors such as where you want to focus learning and for how long. We expect that experienced facilitators will know how to adjust and limit time as needed.

This Activity Spotlight is a component of The Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide by the City of Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI). For information on the facilitation experience recommended for those using the Guide, a glossary of terms, and tips to support collective health, wellbeing, and belonging – in particular of BIPOC – please download the Guide from the RSJI website.



# LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## Participants will:

Explore and reflect on the RSJI Truths.

Create and present a tableau that explores an RSJI Truth and its meaning.

Practice talking about embodiment and how it conveys meaning.

Reflect on the use of tableaus as a way to develop and deepen anti-racist outcomes among teams.





# Participant Preparation

Participants should have a pen or pencil and paper.

## Facilitation Materials

- Space for multiple groups of about 5 participants to create multi-part scenes that convey meaning using the positioning of their bodies.
- The [RSJI Truths](#).
- The Shape of Trust Video Facilitation Guide, "Glossary".

### ACCESSIBILITY

Be mindful of the access needs of the people in your group. Check in ahead of time with participants to find out what access needs they have. When designing the activity, center those who are most impacted. For example, if you have someone in the group who uses a mobility assistance device, you could remind people to use different levels in their poses so that participation does not require

someone to be on the ground, fully upright, or standing without assistance. Avoid using ableist language and assumptions.

Remind participants that they always have the choice to do what feels comfortable and most safe for themselves and others. For example, some people may not want to be touched at all or require consent before others get close to them.

## HOW IT WORKS

### EXPLAIN / READ / REFLECT (15 min)

Begin by sharing that participants will be moving through a series of steps that include an introduction to the RSJI Truths, a physical embodiment activity using the Truths, and a reflective discussion about the activity and the Truths.

Introduce the RSJI Truths. Make sure everyone has a copy and share some context.

The first version of the RSJI Truths was developed in the early days of RSJI as a starting point and a set of non-negotiables for learning about race, racism, and action for racial equity. As the world and the movement for racial justice evolved, so did RSJI. These 10 Truths, published in Fall 2020, represent an accumulation of experience, awareness, and learning from this evolution.

Ask participants to volunteer to take turns reading each one out loud.

Ask participants to silently notice and reflect on what they feel, in their bodies, as they read these. Invite them to notice any discomfort, tightness, ease, calm, or spaciousness. Invite them to be with and be friendly toward any feelings of judgment (for themselves or others) that may come up.

Ask if there are any clarifying questions. This is not a time to discuss the meaning, but rather a brief moment to address anything that isn't clear.



# HOW IT WORKS (continued)

## ASSIGN / EXPLAIN / CREATE (20 min)

Now get people into groups. You might do this by asking participants to count off. There should be about 5 people in each group and no more than 10 groups (for the 10 Truths).

Either assign one of the Truths to each group or ask each group to choose a Truth. It's okay if you don't have enough groups to assign each Truth.

As the facilitator, you may choose the Truths you most want participants to explore. Perhaps you will choose the ones you think will be most supportive to their growth as advocates and organizers for racial equity and social justice.

Explain this next part of the activity:

- Each group will have 15 minutes to co-create a two-part tableau that conveys the meaning of the Truth they are working with. Encourage them to begin by discussing the meaning of their assigned Truth with their group, and talking through possible ways to embody it.
- What is a tableau? A still, dramatic scene. Elements within the tableau appear dynamic and convey emotion, but they do not move. Rather, they are as if captured in a photograph.

- What is a two-part tableau? A tableau in which the people portraying the scene transition from one scene to the next.
- What's an example of a two-part tableau based on one of the Truths? Consider Truth 7: "Government has a responsibility to be anti-racist." The first part of the tableau might portray a scene of government's role in creating racism and codifying it into law. The group might then transition to a scene in which government is undoing those policies, practices, and procedures as an anti-racist act.
- Remind them to consider race, gender and other aspects of social positionality as they determine what meaning they are seeking to convey.
- Let them know that after 15 minutes, each group will present their tableau, in silence, to the other groups.
- Ask for and respond to any questions about the process.

Set a timer for 15 minutes and ask the groups to begin discussing and co-creating. Let them know when 5 and 10 minutes have passed, and again when there are only 2 minutes remaining.



# HOW IT WORKS (continued)

## SHARE / REFLECT (25 min)

Bring the groups back together to perform for each other.

Designate an area as the stage. Explain how this next part will go: each group will read their Truth and then perform their two-part tableau in silence. They will do this two times in a row.

After this, the other groups will spend about 2–3 minutes reflecting out loud about the two-part tableau they've just experienced. Offer these questions for reflection by the other groups:

- How did you feel, in your body, as you watched this tableau?
- What resonated for you, personally?

- How did the group embody the Truth they were working with?
- What feelings, knowledge, curiosities, or resistances are emerging for you about this Truth?
- Did anything feel unclear, confusing, or disconnected from the meaning of that Truth?
- Now, having explained how this part will go, ask for a group to volunteer to be first and have them take the stage. Go through each group.

## REFLECT (15 min)

After each group has performed and the other groups have reflected on their tableaus, bring everybody together to debrief the activity:

- How did it feel to do this activity?
- How did exploring the Truths with your bodies (and minds and spirits and hearts) affect your understanding of the Truths?
- How was this different from an entirely words-based activity or intellectual exploration?
- What did you notice or learn about co-creation? How might tableaus be used in other contexts to move teams toward anti-racist processes and outcomes?
- How might you use the Truths to support your anti-racist, racial equity, and social justice organizing at work?