



advancing  
digital transformation  
in museums

MCN 2019 | NOVEMBER 5-8 | SAN DIEGO

The background of the slide features a photograph of a mission building, likely the San Diego Mission, with a prominent bell tower topped by a cross. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent pink and orange gradient.

# Intersecting Agile and the Antidotes to White Supremacy Culture

Nam Provost | Meaghan Tongen | Nikhil Trivedi  
November 6, 2019

# Session Overview

Scrum is an agile framework that encourages teams to learn through experience, work iteratively, and reflect often. It puts people before process or output, by focusing on the values and environment we share as much as the work we're doing. How could Scrum -- an established framework for addressing complex adaptive problems across industries -- be applied to counteract white supremacy culture in our organizations?

Diversity educators Kenneth Jones and Tema Okun identified the characteristics (and antidotes) of white supremacy culture, including: perfectionism, sense of urgency, power hoarding, fear of open conflict, and individualism. By advocating for transparency, learning, and reflection, Scrum aligns closely with these antidotes.

# Session Agenda

- 2:45 Welcome (5 min)
- 2:50 White Supremacy Culture (15 min)
- 3:05 Intro to Agile + Scrum (5 min)
- 3:10 Ball Point Activity (10 min)
- 3:20 Breakout Discussion (15 min)
- 3:35 Report Back (10 min)

# Welcome

# Land Acknowledgement

We would like to welcome you to this session by acknowledging that the land on which our community gathers is the traditional and unceded territory of the Kumeyaay Nation. We want to pay respect to the citizens of the Kumeyaay Nation, both past and present, and their continuing relationship with their ancestral lands.

# Nam Provost

Nam Provost has served as Mia's Diversity and Inclusion Manager since April 2018. She oversees a new fellowship program and is helping to guide the museum towards equity through programs, relationships and strategies for effective organizational change.

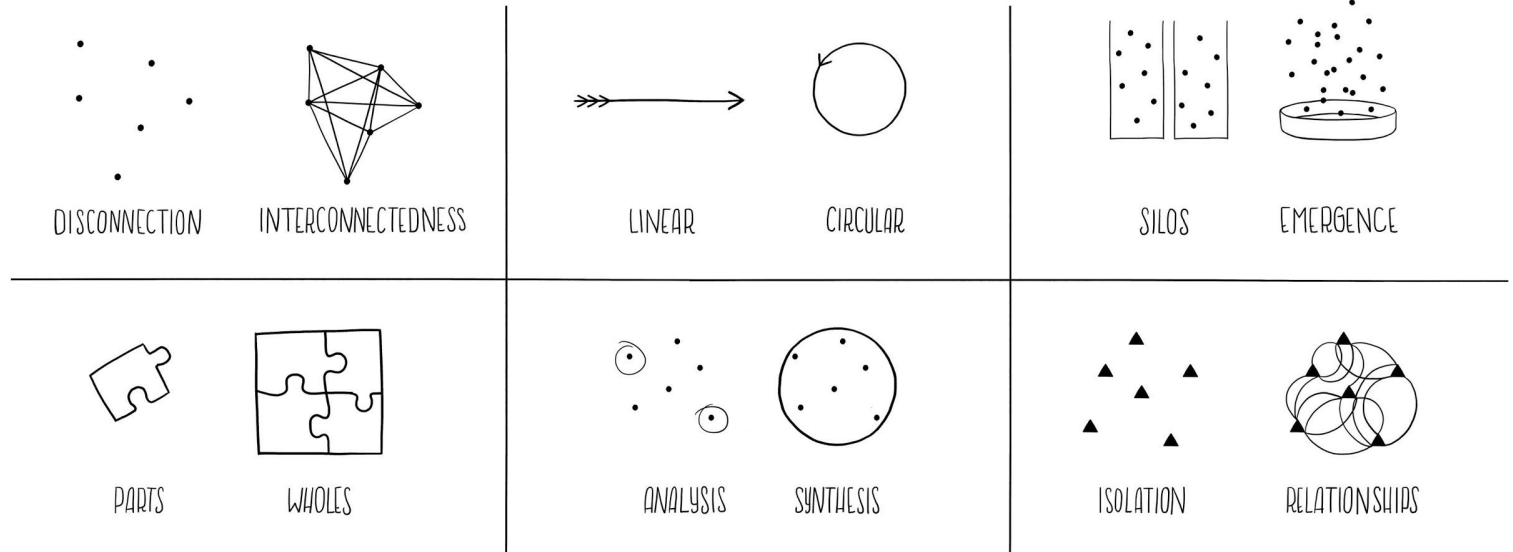
She has facilitated many workshops and courses, hoping to creatively empower individuals and organizations to work towards true Cultural Fluency which is:

The ongoing **journey** of learning the **language of equity** and embedding it into our **critical consciousness** by examining ourselves, learning about cultures and identities different than our own, and **understanding systems** and structures in order to transform ourselves and our organizations.

# Meaghan Tongen

I'm a systems thinker.

I lead “digital strategy” at the Minneapolis Institute of Art (Mia). For me, that means building connections and supportive environments for people through integrated systems, cross-functional teams, beautiful workflows, and collaborative processes that deliver and sustain digital products.



source: <https://medium.com/disruptive-design>

I'm energized by learning about systems, how we interact within and around them, and building processes that create space for teams to grow and succeed.

I also appreciate great coffee, being outside in all seasons, and believe most anything can be accomplished with enough post-it notes.

## nikhil trivedi

I'm a Web Architect at a museum in Chicago and a social justice activist. As a facilitator, educator and strategic planner, my activism work focuses on institutional healing and accountability from historic traumas like colonialism, slavery, genocide, and war. I'm a long-time volunteer with Resilience, Chicago's largest rape crisis center, I'm a regular contributor at The Inluseum, and my writing has been featured in Model View Culture, Fwd: Museums and the Journal for Museum Education. You will also find me playing guitar and stand-up bass, hiking, making herbal medicines, and drinking warm glasses of chai on cold winter nights.



# White Supremacy Culture

2:50

# White Supremacy: Normalizing the Phrase



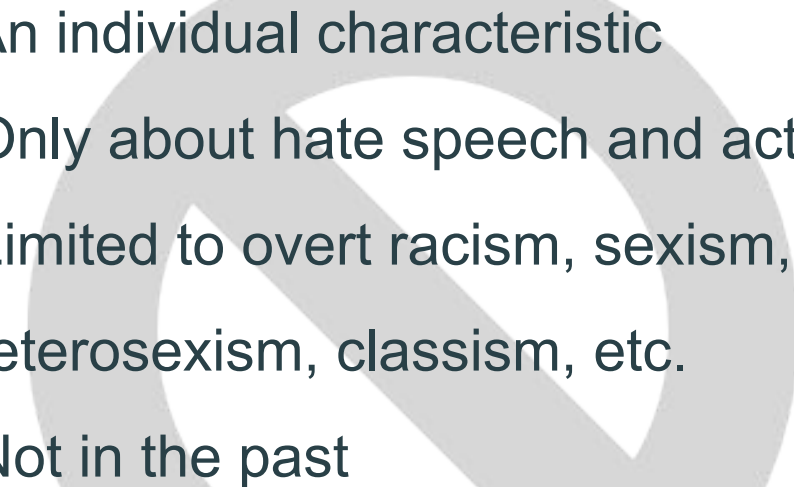
THE LONGER YOU SWIM  
IN A CULTURE, THE MORE  
INVISIBLE IT BECOMES

# White Supremacy

## is...

- The system we are all a part of
- The system of oppression beyond race
- Part of our legacy –whether we acknowledge it or not
- Maintains the status quo
- Is a foundational truth of the US

## is not...

- An individual characteristic
  - Only about hate speech and actions
  - Limited to overt racism, sexism, heterosexism, classism, etc.
  - Not in the past
- 

# Characteristics of White Supremacy Culture

“white supremacy culture” by Tema Okun / dRworks / [www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org)

- Perfectionism
- A sense of urgency
- Defensiveness
- Quantity over quality
- Worship of the written word
- Paternalism
- Either/or thinking
- Power hoarding
- Fear of open conflict
- Individualism
- Progress = bigger, more
- Objectivity
- Right to comfort

# White Supremacy Culture

Intro to Antidotes

# Perfectionism: Antidotes

“white supremacy culture” by Tema Okun / dRworks / [www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org)

develop a culture of appreciation, where the organization takes time to make sure that people’s work and efforts are appreciated;

develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning;

create an environment where people can recognize that mistakes sometimes lead to positive results; separate the person from the mistake;

when offering feedback, always speak to the things that went well before offering criticism; ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently when offering criticism;

realize that being your own worst critic does not actually improve the work, often contributes to low morale among the group, and does not help you or the group to realize the benefit of learning from mistakes

# Sense of urgency: Antidotes

“white supremacy culture” by Tema Okun / dRworks / [www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org)

realistic workplans;

leadership which understands that things take longer than anyone expects;

discuss and plan for what it means to set goals of inclusivity and diversity, particularly in terms of time;

learn from past experience how long things take;

write realistic funding proposals with realistic time frames;

be clear about how you will make good decisions in an atmosphere of urgency;

realize that rushing decisions takes more time in the long run because inevitably people who didn't get a chance to voice their thoughts and feelings will at best resent and at worst undermine the decision because they were left unheard

# Power hoarding: Antidotes

“white supremacy culture” by Tema Okun / dRworks / [www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org)

include power sharing in your organization’s values statement;

discuss what good leadership looks like and make sure people understand that a good leader develops the power and skills of others;

understand that change is inevitable and challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive;

make sure the organization is focused on the mission



# Fear of open conflict: Antidotes

“white supremacy culture” by Tema Okun / dRworks / [www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org)

role play ways to handle conflict before conflict happens;

distinguish between being polite and raising hard issues;

don't require those who raise hard issues to raise them in 'acceptable' ways, especially if you are using the ways in which issues are raised as an excuse not to address those issues;

once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently

# Individualism: Antidotes

“white supremacy culture” by Tema Okun / dRworks / [www.dismantlingracism.org](http://www.dismantlingracism.org)

include teamwork as an important value in your values statement;

make sure the organization is working towards shared goals and people understand how working together will improve performance;

evaluate people’s ability to work in a team as well as their ability to get the job done;

make sure that credit is given to all those who participate in an effort, not just the leaders or most public person;

make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals;

create a culture where people bring problems to the group;

use staff meetings as a place to solve problems, not just a place to report activities

# Continuum on Becoming an Anti-racist, Multicultural Organization

MONOCULTURAL		MULTICULTURAL		ANTI-RACIST		ANTI-RACIST MULTICULTURAL	
Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Defects		Tolerant of Racial and Cultural Differences		Racial and Cultural Differences Seen as Assets			
<b>1. Exclusive</b> A Segregated Institution	<b>2. Passive</b> A "Club" Institution	<b>3. Symbolic Change</b> A Multicultural Institution	<b>4. Identity Change</b> An Anti-Racist Institution	<b>5. Structural Change</b> A Transforming Institution	<b>6. Fully Inclusive</b> A Transformed Institution in a Transformed Society		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intentionally and publicly excludes or segregates African Americans, Native Americans, Latinos and Asian Americans</li> <li>Intentionally and publicly enforces the racist status quo throughout institution</li> <li>Institutionalization of racism includes formal policies and practices, teachings and decision-making on all levels</li> <li>Usually has similar intentional policies and practices toward other socially oppressed groups, such as women, disabled, elderly and children, lesbians and gays, Third World citizens, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tolerant of a limited number of People of Color with "proper" perspective and credentials</li> <li>May still secretly limit or exclude People of Color in contradiction to public policies</li> <li>Continues to intentionally maintain white power and privilege through its formal policies and practices, teachings and decision-making on all levels of institutional life</li> <li>Often declares, "We don't have a problem."</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes official policy pronouncements regarding multicultural diversity</li> <li>Sees itself as "non-racist" institution with open doors to People of Color</li> <li>Carries out intentional inclusiveness efforts, recruiting "someone of color" on committees or office staff</li> <li>Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups, such as women, disabled, elderly and children, lesbians and gays, Third World citizens, etc.</li> </ul> <p>But . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Not those who make waves"</li> <li>Little or no contextual change in culture, policies and decision-making</li> <li>Is still relatively unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing understanding of racism as barrier to effective diversity</li> <li>Develops analysis of systemic racism</li> <li>Sponsors programs of anti-racism training</li> <li>New consciousness of institutionalized white power and privilege</li> <li>Develops intentional identity as an "anti-racist" institution</li> <li>Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities</li> <li>Increasing commitment to dismantle racism and eliminate inherent white advantage</li> </ul> <p>But . . .</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commits to process of intentional institutional restructuring, based on anti-racist analysis and identity</li> <li>Audits and restructures all aspects of institutional life to ensure full participation of People of Color, including their worldview, culture and lifestyles</li> <li>Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision-making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institution's life and work</li> <li>Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community, and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities</li> <li>Anti-racist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset</li> <li>Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities in society, based on anti-racist commitments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Future vision of an institution and wider community that has overcome systemic racism</li> <li>Institution's life reflects full participation and shared power with diverse racial, cultural and economic groups in determining its mission, structure, constituency, policies and practices</li> <li>Full participation in decisions that shape the institution, and inclusion of diverse cultures, lifestyles and interests</li> <li>A sense of restored community and mutual caring</li> <li>Allies with others in combating all forms of social oppression</li> </ul>	<p>© By Crossroads Ministry: Adapted from original concept by Baily Jackson and Rita Hardiman, and further developed by Andrea Avazian and Ronice Branding.</p>	

# Intro to Agile + Scrum

3:05

# Agile

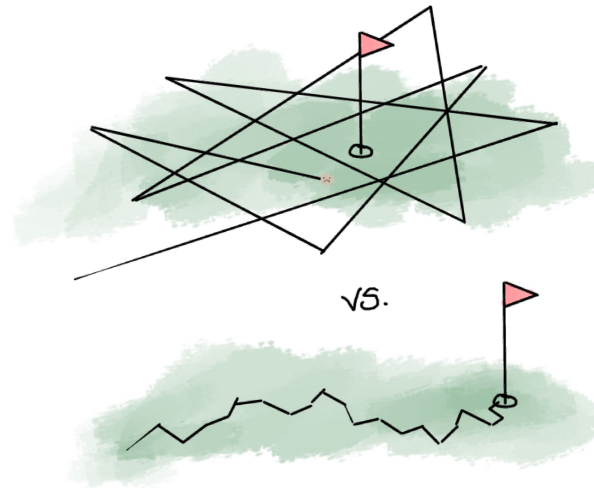
Agile methodology is centered around the idea of **iterative development**, where requirements and solutions evolve through collaboration between self-organizing cross-functional teams.

The founders of agile worked to create a set of compatible values based on trust and respect for each other, and to promote organizational models centered on people, collaboration, and building communities in which they – and others – would want to work.

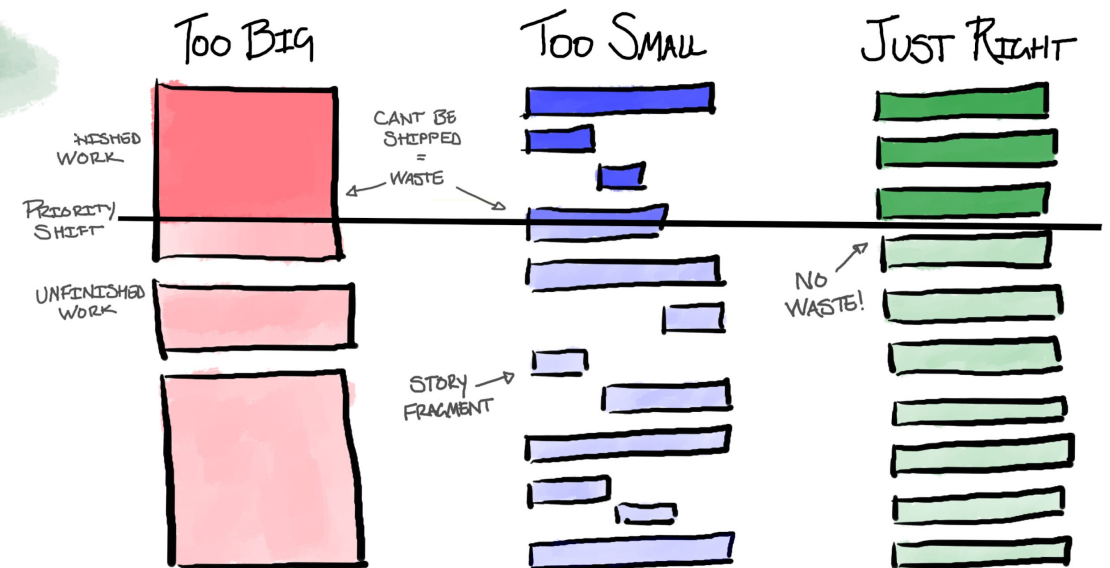
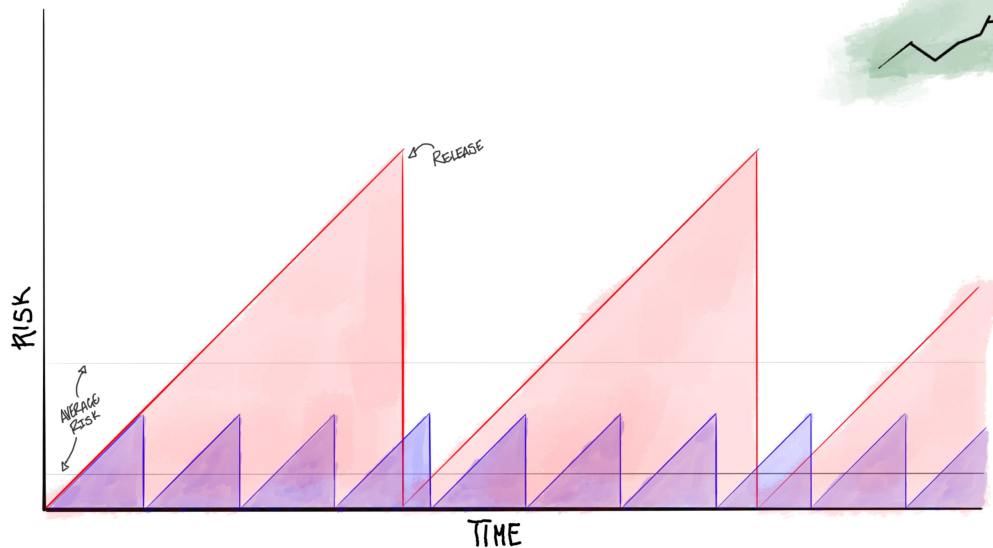
# Agile

Iterative improvements  
beat big bets.

Small, frequent releases  
are safer than big,  
infrequent releases.



Well-sized stories mean  
less wasted work.

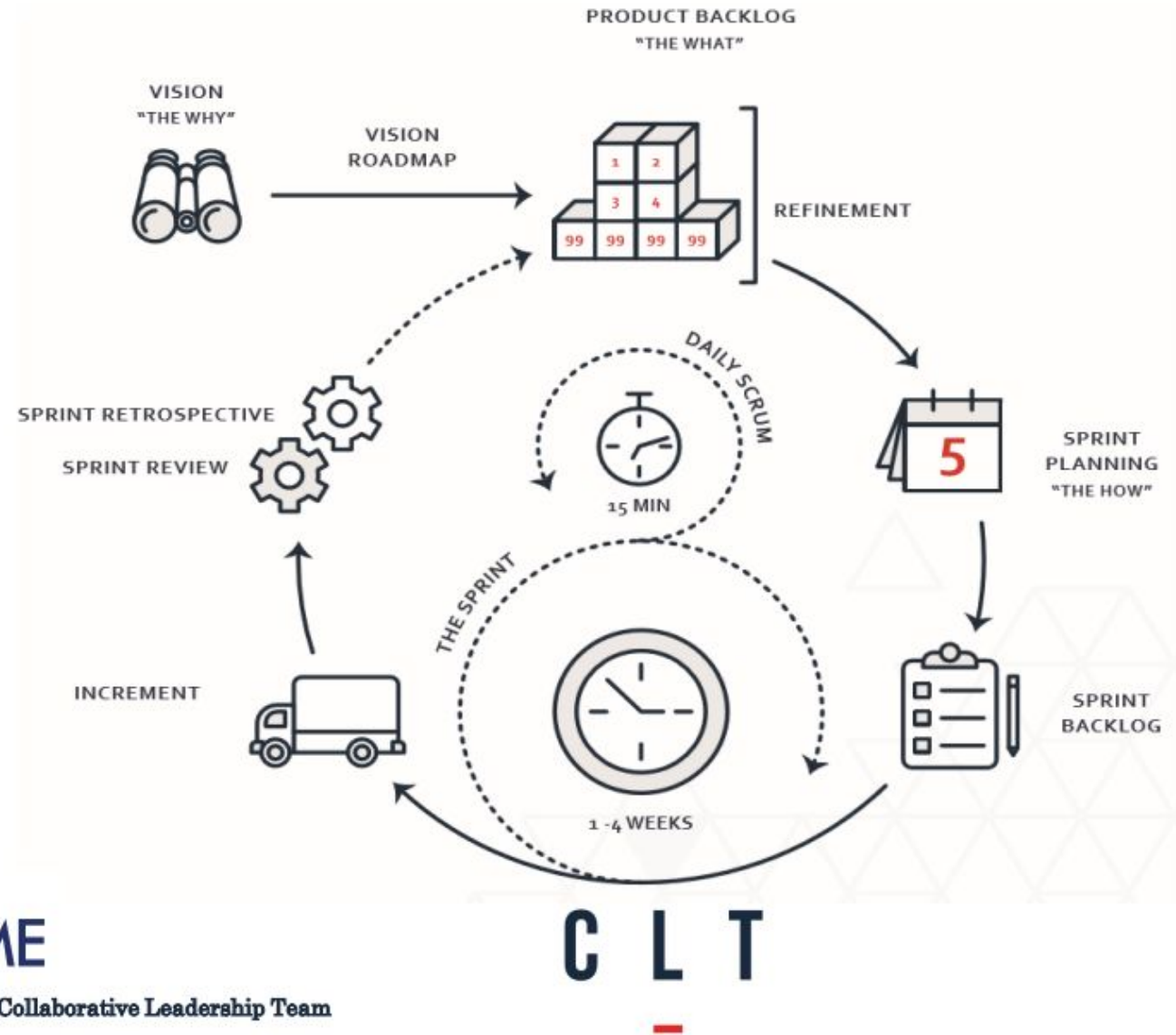


“Three drawings I use to explain agile and the stories I tell about them”, Michael Williams, Dec 12, 2018, <https://medium.com/swlh/three-drawings-i-use-to-explain-agile-9c0ef15b64b8>

# Scrum

Scrum is an **agile process framework** that encourages teams to learn through experience, work iteratively, and reflect often.

It puts people before process or output, by **focusing on the values and environment we share** as much as the work we're doing.



Copyright 2018 Collaborative Leadership Team

# It's a mindset.

## Agile Values

Individuals and interactions over processes and tools

Working product over comprehensive documentation

Customer collaboration over contract negotiation

Responding to change over following a plan

**Scrum Team Values:** Focus, Courage, Openness, Commitment, and Respect

**Scrum Pillars:** Transparency. Inspection. Adaption.



Let's try it.

3:10

# Ball Point Game (10 minutes)

Self-organized team

**Objective:** Achieve as many Ball Points as possible within a 2-minute Sprint

## Requirements:

- Each ball = 1 Point
- A dropped ball is 0 points
- The ball must pass through every team members' hands at least once
- The ball must return to the person that it started with
- Each ball must have air time
- Team members cannot pass immediately to their right or to their left

# Activity: Ball Point Game Debrief

What did you learn from the game?

How did the team make decisions?

How would things have gone differently if the team had an appointed leader?

How important were retrospectives?

Did you realize stress? – When?

“If you want truly to understand something, try to change it.”

Kurt Lewin, Social Psychologist

# White Supremacy Culture Antidotes via Scrum

- develop a learning organization, where it is expected that everyone will make mistakes and those mistakes offer opportunities for learning (**Agile Values**)
- learn from past experience how long things take (**Velocity**)
- take the time to analyze how people inside and outside the organization get and share information (**Information Radiators**)
- make sure that everyone knows and understands who makes what decisions in the organization (**Scrum Team**)
- once a conflict is resolved, take the opportunity to revisit it and see how it might have been handled differently (**Retrospective**)
- include teamwork as an important value in your values statement (**Agile Values**)
- make people accountable as a group rather than as individuals (**Scrum Team**)
- create a culture where people bring problems to the group (**Scrum Team**)
- include process goals in your planning, for example make sure that your goals speak to how you want to do your work, not just what you want to do (**Agile Values**)

# Breakout Discussion

3:20

# Move Up / Move Up

# Report Back + Questions

3:35



# Resources

- Okun White Supremacy Characteristics:  
[dismantlingracism.org/white-supremacy-culture.html](http://dismantlingracism.org/white-supremacy-culture.html)
- Scrum Guide: [scrum.org/resources/scrum-guide](http://scrum.org/resources/scrum-guide)
- Scrum: The Art of Doing Twice the Work in Half the Time, by Jeff Sutherland



Thank you