TABLE 8.1   White Supremacy Culture: Four Characteristics That Promote Shame and Their Antidotes

PERFECTIONISM

Looks like	Antidotes
• Little appreciation expressed among people for the work that others are doing • Pointing out either how the person or work is inadequate or personalizing mistakes • Little time, energy, or money put into reflection or identifying lessons learned	• Develop a culture of appreciation and a learning organization, where we expect to make and learn from mistakes • When offering feedback, always speak to the what went well before offering criticism • Ask people to offer specific suggestions for how to do things differently

EITHER/OR THINKING

Looks like	Antidotes
• Things are either/or, good/bad, right/wrong, with us/against us • Closely linked to perfectionism in making it difficult to learn from mistakes or conflict • Results in trying to simplify complex things—for example believing that poverty is simply a result of lack of education	• Notice when people use either/or language or oversimplify complex issues • Push to come up with more than two alternatives • Slow it down and encourage people to do a deeper analysis

POWER HOARDING

Looks like	Antidotes
• Little, if any, value around sharing power • Power seen as a limited quantity • Those with power feel threatened when anyone suggests organizational changes	• Include power sharing in your organization's values statement • Calibrate what good leadership looks like and include the notion of sharing power • Understand that challenges to your leadership can be healthy and productive

DEFENSIVENESS

Looks like	Antidotes
• The organization is structured to protect power as it exists, creating an oppressive culture • People respond to new or challenging ideas with defensiveness, making it very difficult to raise these ideas • A lot of energy in the organization is spent trying to make sure that people's feelings aren't getting hurt (white fragility)	• Understand the link between defensiveness and fear (of losing power, losing face, losing comfort, losing privilege) • Work on your own defensiveness; name defensiveness as a problem when it is one • Discuss the ways in which defensiveness or resistance to new ideas impedes the mission

Table adapted from Okun and Jones, 2001.