

Post course resources: Active anti racism training

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1 AAR Workbook with answers

What is 'Race'?

'Race' is a social construction and has no biological reality. However, the effects of racism have real and lasting impacts on people of colour. Colonial history has played a strong part in forging enduring popular understanding of skin colour, 'race' and ethnicity. The study and practice of eugenics (or Social Darwinism) used skin colour and other physical features as identifiers for hierarchical concepts of 'race' differences. This was positioned in justification of our treatment of fellow humans for our own profit through colonialism and the slave trade. The legacy of this has remained encoded in a widely accepted fable about biological superiority and inferiority along racial categories, which at times also includes beliefs around nationhood, patriotism, and nationalism.

Anti-racism is generally defined as an active stance against racial hatred, bias, or systemic oppression of marginalized groups. It is a deliberate use of strategies and practices that challenge, and counter racism, inequities, prejudices, and discrimination based on race. In any given moment, we are aware of and choosing how to proceed in a way that is inclusive to those around us.

Being Anti Racist at a personal and interpersonal level

Discrimination is the unjust treatment of people based on the groups or classes they belong to. Often, discrimination stems from biases or ignorance: when we fear or misunderstand someone who is different from us, we treat them differently. It's essential to take personal responsibility, to step back and see all the ways discrimination impacts us—as people experiencing discrimination and people who need to examine our own biases.

When we choose to be antiracist, we become actively conscious about race and racism. It means we take actions to end racial inequities in our daily lives. Being antiracist is believing that racism is everyone's problem, and we all have a role in stopping it. This means having a personal curiosity and taking responsibility to challenge the cycle of racism

What is Anti Racist Governance?

Anti-racism is active and continuous. It is about changing not only what is done but also how this is done. It is about outcomes rather than intent and finding ways to seek out inherent and structural racism with the assumption that it will be present unless we take steps to deliberately disrupt it and mitigate against it resurfacing in our organisations and communities. The whole community needs an understanding of the issues around 'race' and

racism, to know where racism dwells, and to know where there are opportunities within staff roles and responsibilities to deploy an anti-racist lens whilst keeping this a strategic priority embedded at every level of the organisation.

Becoming Anti Racist

In our professional lives and personal environments, here are some further ways you can actively demonstrate anti-racism:

- Build self-awareness of your beliefs and experiences
- Recognize oppressive systems
- Identify small changes you can make

Build Self-Awareness

The first step towards creating equitable and inclusive learning environments is to examine the various lenses through which we see the world.

Our experiences, beliefs, identities, values, and histories come together to shape our personal lenses—the filters through which we perceive our surroundings, the people around us and the world at large.

Our personal lenses have focal points that make some things more visible than others.

Your personal lens can be shaped by a combination of the following filters:

- Race & ethnicities
- Cultural affiliation (cultural practices you identify with)
- Mental health
- Gender identities
- Faith
- Socio-economic status
- Body size
- Sex
- Abilities
- Language
- Sexual orientation
- Western cultural and social norms

Exercise 1

Think about how does racism affect people around me?

How does racism affect me?

What can I do to promote an active anti racist culture?

How easy would I find this?

Easy 1 2 3 4 5 Difficult

What challenges would I experience?

At work - questions to ask ourselves

How do we engage families in conversations around race & equality.

How do we promote engagement with 'hard to reach' groups? (These are groups that are often stigmatised as being different, i.e., refugees, asylum seekers, traveller families, families from minority ethnic communities)

How do we recruit staff?

Also:

- How are people made to feel welcome in the community?
- How well does our organisation keep people informed?
- Are communications accessible and available in different languages?
- Are people informed about the benefits of being multilingual? (As opposed to it being seen as a negative)
- Is there a need for staff to lead focus groups to learn more about people in the community and their needs?
- When communities are asked for their views, how are these actioned? How do we feed back any changes or communicate the reasons why we aren't making changes?
- In what ways do we work with the community? How do we know what impact these have?
- How do we keep abreast of changes that may impact our wider community?

Exercise 2

Ask yourselves:

- Do you know the ethnic and cultural communities that make up your own organisational community?
- Do you have an anti-racism lead in your leadership team, on the board who can work together and lead on talking and acting on race equality?

Creating an anti-racist environment is an act of community building and awareness. We know that to make a difference, it is essential to build support, credibility, and legitimacy intentionally. You can work towards becoming a meaningful ally for all in the workspace and community by advocating for equity consciously with passion and commitment. This means going beyond allyship when it aligns with popular culture and committing to actively engage, communicate in ways to support, and stand with anyone who is excluded or discriminated against based on race.

Managing conversations

Avoid “right” and “wrong” While some opinions are commonly accepted as “right,” it is unproductive for conversations like these to cast someone’s statements or beliefs as “wrong.” Instead, refer back to speaking from one’s personal experience.

Name challenges & disagreements Your members may very well have different opinions about social justice issues and have different experiences with history, institutions, and the law. Those differences will not be resolved over the course of a single conversation. Rather than trying to gloss over those differences, name those multiple perspectives without judgement.

Use facts graciously – not to shut down a conversation Remind members that this is a conversation. Everyone’s personal experience matters. Recommend that members share information to deepen the discussion, not to shut down the conversation.

Allow for a lack of knowledge and room for mistakes as everyone is on their own paths of anti-racism and equity, diversity, and inclusion it is important to remember that we may make mistakes along the way. Correcting language and providing information and learning opportunities versus shutting someone down will yield greater results and more active participation in anti-racist efforts.

If something offensive is said, consider some options:

- Call people “in” not “out.” When you are holding someone accountable for an offensive or ignorant statement, think about how to address the hurt they caused and still engage them in the conversation. Instead of removing them from the discussion, keep the group intact and use the moment to role model how to respond to the comments.
- Pause the discussion to give everyone space to reflect and step back from any tension. Use the time to check in with members, especially members who may have been directly impacted and consider how you will approach the situation.
- Move back and listen. Take on the role of an active listener. Challenge yourself to concentrate completely on what the other people are saying without interrupting and instead of crafting a response.
- Remove yourself from the conversation. Do what you need to do to take care of yourself. If you do not feel like you can continue to engage in the conversation, step away.

Exercise 3

What is one new technique you can use to manage conversations from an anti-racist approach?

What will you do if the conversations do not go as planned?

2 Active Anti Racism Language & Glossary

Understanding and rethinking the language that we use is essential to advancing anti-racist conversations. Language is fluid and identity are central to these conversations. We only need to look back over recent years to see how communities and individuals are reclaiming their identity as a result of conversations and knowledge. Different language is used for different times and purposes; when we're talking about or to individuals it's important to remember that not everyone will identify with the terminology used here so we recommend asking to find out how they identify, then using their preferred choices.

Building confidence in language and understanding the meaning behind it is a vital part of your anti-racist learning and should help you develop your knowledge and conversations. We hope you find the explanations and definitions of these terms helpful.

It's important to note that these suggestions are constantly evolving, and we are always reviewing these, they are not one size fits all. We also recognise that there is no 'perfect solution', even our own use of language has limitations.

Racism

Racism is the belief that the distinct physical features we see amongst people, such as skin colour, facial features, hair, as well as place of origin are indicators of different abilities, qualities and/or worth.

This is a deliberately prejudiced belief system based on the idea that those with white skin are superior to those with darker skin and that being white is the "norm".

This belief system is still in existence today and is not simply about "bad" individual intentions and/or actions.

Individual / Interpersonal Racism

This form of racism occurs by people, between people. Someone can be racist about someone or to someone. Examples include both overt forms, such as telling racist jokes, name-calling or acts of violence but also more covert forms such microaggressions (see below) or even silence.

Institutional Racism

Happens when there is deep rooted inequality in the structures and processes carried out by groups in power – governments, police, schools, businesses (employment). e.g., a new policing bill or piece of legislation that could disproportionately affect opportunities and progress of people who are Black and Brown, or Gypsy, Roma Travellers for example.

Systemic Racism

A form of racism that is embedded as normal practice within society or an organisation. It can lead to discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, education and more. The systemic oppression of a racial group tends to be to the social, economic, and political advantage of another. An example would be, if you are a Black African Caribbean woman, you are 4 x more likely to die in childbirth. * Another example is the fact that there are no Black CEOs in **any** of Britain's 100 largest companies. *

*Morrice maternal report *forbes.com

Internalised Racism

This form of racism is a direct result of the three above. It's the subtle and overt message and actions that reinforce negative beliefs and self-hatred in individuals. For example, this could be as subtle as trying to maintain European beauty standards in ourselves, or as extreme as trying to bleach our skin.

Anti-Racism

Is an active process to work against racism. It differs from simply 'not being racist', which is passive. It recognises how racism can happen without individuals necessarily meaning for it to, and that it can even happen without a recognisable individual 'victim'. Anti-racism encourages conscious efforts and deliberate equitable actions intended to provide equal opportunities and outcomes for all people on both an individual and a systemic level. Watch our video below for an in-depth explanation!

Anti-Blackness or Anti-Black Racism

The concept of anti-blackness acknowledges that not all people who experience racism have the same lived experience. Colonial ideas and stereotypes about Black people are still prevalent today and anti-Black racism can even be upheld by people who may experience racism themselves. To be clear, all kinds of racism are deplorable, but it is worth recognising and remembering that racism can disproportionately affect certain groups. For example, Black people are 3 x more likely to be 'stopped & searched' than South Asian people. It is therefore important that all communities and individuals work against all forms of racism.

Race

Race is a social construct – rooted in history – and is not scientifically based. The so-called science of the time has long since been debunked though its damaging stereotypes remain. It is important to recognise that scientifically there are no traits, no characteristics, not even one individual gene present in one 'race' and absent in another. The categorisation of races was created to justify the enslavement and oppression of one 'race' (socially constructed group) over another. To divide people in order to uphold power and wealth.

All humans are genetically 99.9% identical, and it sounds corny but there really is only ONE RACE: the human race.

Ethnicity

Race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably but are two different things. Neither has any scientific basis. Race tends to be assigned externally by others whereas ethnicity is based on more cultural roots and tends to be used to self-identify. Ethnicity is richer than 'race' in the sense that a person's ethnicity can be multiple and more complex eg, Irish Indian or Jamaican British. It can be difficult to disentangle race and ethnicity as an individual may identify one way when people 'see them' another. For example, a person with Chinese heritage born and brought up in Nigeria may identify more strongly with their Nigerian culture and when asked about their ethnicity respond with Nigerian.

Overt Racism

The intentional and/or obvious harmful attitudes, language, actions, or behaviours towards another individual or group because of their 'race' or ethnicity. E.g calling someone a racial slur.

Covert Racism

Attitudes, language, actions, or behaviours that are concealed or are subtle rather than obvious to the general public. These reveal the racist structures or attitudes without actually saying or doing anything obviously 'offensive'.

E.g choosing not to interview someone because they have a 'foreign' sounding name.

Tokenism

The practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing. For example, recruiting a small number of Black or Brown people in order to give the appearance of equality or diversity within a workforce; or companies putting black squares on social media in support of “Black Lives Matter” but taking no authentic action within their organisation or otherwise to address racism.

Intersectionality

In simple terms, it's the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and oppression, and we must consider all of the factors that can marginalise people: skin colour, faith, gender, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, physical ability and more.

Microaggression

The everyday, sometimes subtle interactions or behaviours that communicate bias toward historically marginalised groups. e.g “Where are you really from?”

Allyship / White Ally

A white ally / accomplice understands the limits of their knowledge about other people's experiences but doesn't use that as a reason not to think and /or act. They confront racism as it comes up daily and seek to deconstruct it institutionally at the risk of experiencing some of that oppression.

Allyship can often mean personal sacrifice; whether that is facing an uncomfortable conversation rather than avoiding it or passing up an opportunity that they acknowledge would be better suited to someone else that has been overlooked.

White Supremacy or White Body Supremacy

The social, economic, and political systems that collectively and inherently enable white people to maintain power: individual and institutional attitudes, practices, and policies that elevate the white body as the 'standard' and the 'norm' against which all other persons' worth is measured. This is not the same as being a White Supremacist or being part of an extremist group. You do not need to be a White Supremacist to uphold White Supremacy.

White Fragility

When white people engage in conversations about racism it may trigger a range of defensive actions, feelings, and behaviours, such as anger, fear, and silence. This is often termed as White Fragility and tends to happen because this is the first time they have had to deal with conversations about race. By practising, developing stamina, and building resilience white people can begin to get comfortable with their discomfort and feel more able to listen, learn and grow.

White Privilege

This (often divisive) term does not mean a person has had a privileged life or that they have not had any difficulties; it means that a white person's struggles have never been caused, amplified, or structurally imposed on them because of the colour of their skin.

Colour Blindness

Aka: “I don't see colour”. The idea that the best way to end racism is by treating individuals as equally as possible, with no regard to ethnicity / identity – however this not only dismisses the lived experiences of people who are subjected to racism, but also suggests that racism does not exist so long as one ignores it and serves as a way to disengage from conversations about racism entirely.

Whataboutery

Responding to a comment, explanation or difficult question with a comment that raises a different issue. This is often called 'Whataboutery'. Whilst the comment may stem from a legitimate curiosity or concern about different topics, 'whataboutery' is commonly used to move the topic away from racism and is often a way of deflecting.

These kind of responses devalue, ignore, and minimise the impact and experiences of people impacted by racism and as well as not allowing racism to be discussed, can cause harm. Watch our video below for a deeper understanding of this.

Bias

Actions for or against people or groups of people influenced by our own personal opinions based on stereotypes before we know them. E.g., the response to and treatment of Ukrainian refugees compared to Sudanese refugees.

Unconscious Bias

Unconscious actions for or against people or groups of people influenced by our own personal opinions based on stereotypes before we know them. These stereotypes are perpetuated through media, family & peers, societal ideals etc. E.g being surprised when the senior manager is Black.

Black

A term used to identify people with African heritage – whether that be African or Afro-Caribbean (remember, Black people are not indigenous peoples of the Caribbean) and also those of mixed heritage who identify as Black. It is a term that in the past was avoided and replaced with words such as "coloured" but on the whole, more and more Black people are identifying this way and it is becoming a preferred term.

Minoritised or Racially Minoritised

These terms refer to racial and ethnic groups that are in a minority in the population of the country that the term is being used. In the UK, it usually covers all ethnic groups except white British. For example, it includes groups such as Jewish people or Gypsy, Roma Traveller communities as well as Black people.

3 Active Anti Racism Reflective worksheet

1. Do you believe racial equality is important?

2. Do you think being anti racist is essential at work

3. Should organisations be investing time and thought into promoting anti racist cultures?

4. Have you experienced any examples of Racism at work?

5. Have you witnessed any Racism at work?

6. Were you able to speak up at the time?

7. If not, why not? What or who stopped you?

8. What does 'not being racist' mean to you?

9. Whose responsibility is it to embed anti racism in your services?

10. What is one thing you can do to make your work place an anti-racist space?

Notes

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