

ANTI-RACISM DISCUSSION GUIDE

eliminating racism
empowering women

ywca

metropolitan chicago

**UNTIL
JUSTICE**

JUST IS

The tragic death of George Floyd at the hand (knee) of law enforcement. The murders and lynchings of too many other African Americans, whose names have been forgotten or were never publicly known. Unjustified calls to 911 by white Beckys, Karens, and Amys, putting African Americans at lethal risk, just for being Black. Over 400 years of systemic oppression and exclusion. White privilege and fragility.

We seem to have arrived at a moment of reckoning. A collective awakening. And just as importantly, an opportunity for redemption.

Since the 1980s, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago's mission has been to eliminate racism and empower women. For decades, our organization has been working to end systemic racism and address its effects through direct services and public policy activities. Through the formation of the Racial Justice League and the launch of the "Until Justice Just Is" campaign, we invite you to join us as we seek to seize this moment and move forward as a nation, past our unjust history and towards an equitable, inclusive, and just future.

We cannot get there alone or on segregated tracks. We cannot allow "Black Lives Matter" to become just a slogan or a one-off statement of support. We must recognize that it is a call to action. To work together.

UNTIL JUSTICE JUST IS.

BEFORE YOU START.

Inspired by the **Black Lives Matter** movement, this discussion guide focuses primarily on the gap between the Black and white experiences.

It is not intended as a comprehensive exploration of all aspects of racism or other forms of hate. We know that discussions about race and racism can be uncomfortable and painful. Through this discussion guide, our goal is to promote learning, understanding, healing, and collaboration. We invite you to have a courageous conversation.

HERE ARE SOME SUGGESTED TIPS AND GROUND RULES:

CREATE SPACE for grace. This is not an easy discussion for anyone. Emotions like anger, fear, defensiveness, shame, and grief may appear.

RECOGNIZE that racism—both direct and vicarious—has a profound personal impact on African Americans. George Floyd could have been our father, husband, brother, son.

GIVE CREDIT for being brave enough to come to the table. People may say things that are hurtful or ignorant. It may even feel intentional. Often it is not. We are all struggling.

LISTEN, REFLECT, RESPOND—in that order.

DON'T DOUBLE TEAM OR PILE ON. Don't interrupt or make personal attacks

IF YOU FEEL ANGRY OR DEFENSIVE, break the power of those emotions by declaring them.

WALK AWAY if it gets to be too much, and never challenge anyone for needing a break.

DO NOT FEEL LIKE YOU MUST RUSH or answer every question. This guide covers a lot of ground.

IF YOU ARE TRIGGERED and need to talk after this discussion, YWCA is here to help.

IDENTITY AND PLACE.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF.

Share your name and as much or as little as you want about your race, ethnicity, culture, family, neighborhood, economic circumstances, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, or gender identification—whatever it is that you want or think people need to know about you before embarking on this conversation.

“Identity” has so much meaning to each of us. Why was it important to share certain aspects of your background but not others?



Chicago remains one of the most segregated major cities in the US. According to a Metropolitan Planning Council and Urban Institute Study, Chicago could see \$4.4 billion in additional income each year, a 30% lower homicide rate, and 83,000 more bachelors degrees if it were not segregated.¹ Take a few minutes to look through the photos on your phone. Or review your social network connections. If you have neither of these, make a list of the people you interact with on a daily basis—your friends, neighbors, coworkers.

Do you feel like you live a segregated life? If so, why? What have been the benefits? What have been the costs? How do you think the consequences of segregation have been different for whites versus African Americans?

BUILDING A BETTER WORLD.

Justice and equality are two critical terms. Gaining alignment around their meaning is not easy.

Justice is a concept that has fascinated philosophers since the beginning of civilization. It has different meanings in different cultures. Justice can mean punishment. Justice can mean mercy. Justice can mean fairness—making sure all people receive what they deserve. It is also often in “the eye of the beholder.”

Equity is another important term. It captures the concept that “equal is not always fair.” Spending more time with a sick child versus a healthy one; giving the disabled special seats on the bus; giving a slower person a head start in a race. These are all concepts of equity, fairness, and maybe even justice.

What does “justice” mean to you?



What would an equitable and just world look like?



What is your role in making that world a reality?

**"DADDY
CHANGED
THE WORLD!"**

These are the words of George Floyd’s daughter as she sat on her uncle’s shoulders watching the crowd commemorating her father’s death. [If you watch this clip](#), you will see that in her innocence, she said it with optimism, faith, a bit of bewilderment, and even a tinge of joy. We pray she is right.

FACING THE FACTS.

SYSTEMIC RACISM LEADS TO WIDESPREAD DISPARITIES FOR BLACK AMERICANS.

HEALTH

Compared to white Americans, Black Americans are 2-3x as likely to die during childbirth and 2x as likely to die from Covid-19.²

EDUCATION

The average non-white school district receives \$2,226 less per student, and the persisting achievement gap means Black students are less likely to attend college, thus reducing their lifetime earnings by 65%.³

WEALTH

Black Americans are more likely to be turned down for mortgages and are dramatically less likely to own homes, which is part of why Black American families have 90% less wealth than white families.⁴

BUSINESS

Black-owned businesses are 2x as likely to be denied loans as similarly situated white-owned ones. Up to 95% of Black-owned businesses may have been shut out of the federal government's recent Paycheck Protection Program.⁵

HOUSING

Black families are more likely to live near concentrated poverty because of discriminatory mortgage policies and racist housing laws that were abolished only a few decades ago. A Black family making \$157k per year is less likely to qualify for a loan than a white family earning \$40k. "Redlining" – a well known discriminatory FHA policy, discouraged lending to Blacks for decades.⁶

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Besides being twice as likely to be killed by police, Black Americans are more likely to be stopped by the police, detained pretrial, charged with more serious crimes, and sentenced more harshly than white people.⁷

GETTING TO THE ROOT.

**ALL OF THE FACTS LISTED
ABOVE ARE CONSEQUENCES OF
"SYSTEMIC" OR "STRUCTURAL" OR
"INSTITUTIONAL" RACISM.**

These terms are used interchangeably to describe institutional, historical, cultural, and even "legal" practices that, over time, create deep disparities and disadvantages. Different from personal racism, these forms of racism exclude entire categories of people from equal opportunity in our society and economy.

Do you accept that systemic racism exists?



Have you ever felt impacted by systemic racism, either for your detriment or benefit?



How can we break down or overcome systemic racism?

ACKNOWLEDGING PRIVILEGE.

ANOTHER TERM THAT WE ARE HEARING MORE ABOUT TODAY IS "WHITE PRIVILEGE"

There is no firm definition of the term but, in essence, it describes the set of advantages that whites may not even realize they have. It is the presumption of greater trustworthiness, the freedom to go anywhere, or speak freely. Some have asserted that the right to assume one's own experiences as everyone's experiences is a form of "white privilege." One scholar described "white privilege" as "invisible packages of unearned assets."⁸ But these packages are not always invisible. Data show that white families are twice as likely to receive an inheritance as Black families. And when they do inherit, white inheritances are nearly three times as much as Black inheritances and on average increase white wealth by \$100,000 but only \$4,000 for Black families.⁸

What is your reaction to the term "white privilege"?



Do you believe "white privilege" exists?



Have you experienced it? Do you know people who have experienced it? How does it manifest itself?



Have you felt the sting of not having it?



Do you think there is a connection between "white privilege" and "structural racism"?

BEING AN ALLY.

Within the context of social justice, “ally” has been defined as “a person that actively promotes and aspires to advance the culture of inclusion through intentional, positive, and conscious efforts to benefit people as a whole.”¹⁰ We all have a stake in building an inclusive, equitable, and just world. Black people need to be freed from the yoke of racism. And white people need to be freed, too. We all need to be freed. We are all held back by racism and other forms of injustice and hate, even if it is just the stain on psyche or soul.

What is your individual responsibility in ending racism and building an inclusive, equitable, and just world?



Was there ever a time you used your privilege to help others? Why? What was the impact? On you? On the person you helped?



Was there ever a time you could have used your privilege but didn't? Why not? What was the impact? On you? On the person you didn't help?



Do you think those with privilege have a duty to leverage it to empower others?

HEALING AND REDEMPTION.

**“Black Lives Matter”
is not a slogan.
It is a call to action.**

How do we capture the power of this moment to build
real and sustainable change?



What do we need for healing to begin?



How will we know when justice, just is?

UNITED WE STAND. TOGETHER **WE ACT.**

Until the land of the free
is **free of racism.**

Until the home of the brave is
brave enough to change.

Until "by the people" and
"for the people" means doing
right by **all the people.**

Until **justice** just is.

ABOUT

ABOUT **YWCA** METROPOLITAN CHICAGO

Founded in 1876, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a social enterprise committed to eliminating racism, empowering women, and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all. As a leading association among a national network of more than 200 YWCAs, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago impacts tens of thousands of women and families annually through comprehensive human services provided across the region. YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is a leading service provider in the areas of sexual violence support services, early childhood and child care provider services, family support services, youth STEM programming, and economic empowerment services.

Our commitment to racial justice, equity, and inclusion runs through all of our programs. Located in the third-largest American city, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago serves as a national incubator for innovative programming, outreach and engagement strategies. Contributing to our diverse and balanced economy, YWCA Metropolitan Chicago is working at the individual and systems levels to create an inclusive marketplace where everyone thrives. The organization is also an active member of many national, state, county and city-level coalitions advocating for policies that combat racism and positively impact women and families. Learn more at www.ywca-chicago.org or follow @ywcachicago.

SOURCES

¹ <https://thecostofsegregationmetroplanning.org/work/project/33>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2019/p0905-racial-ethnic-disparities-pregnancy-deaths.html> <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>

³ <https://www.npr.org/2019/02/26/696794821/why-white-school-districts-have-so-much-more-money> <https://www.manhattan-institute.org/high-school-college-wage-gap>

⁴ <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/up-front/2020/02/27/examining-the-black-white-wealth-gap>

⁵ <https://www.responsiblelending.org/sites/default/files/nodes/files/research-publication/crl-cares-act2-smallbusinesses-may2020.pdf>

⁶ <https://tcf.org/content/report/attacking-black-white-opportunity-gap-comes-residential-segregation>

⁷ <https://www.vera.org/newsroom/research-confirms-that-entrenched-racism-manifests-in-disparate-treatment-of-black-americans-in-criminal-justice-system>

⁸ <https://nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack>

⁹ <https://www.epi.org/publication/receiving-an-inheritance-helps-white-families-more-than-black-families>

¹⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shereatcheson/2018/11/30/allyship-the-key-to-unlocking-the-power-of-diversity>