

Racial Literacy

For Individuals with Disabilities

What is **Racial Literacy**?

Racial Literacy is the knowledge, skills, and awareness needed to talk thoughtfully about race and racism.

Racial Literacy can also include:

- The ability to identify racism when it happens
- Understanding the role racism plays in society
- Having strategies to counter or cope with racism

What is **Race**?

Race is categorizing humans into different groups based on their physical differences. Race is significant because of the social meanings attached to perceived physical differences, such as skin color, hair color, facial characteristics, etc. and the political and economic forces that reinforce these perceptions.

What is **Racism**?

Racism is a system of advantage based on race. Racism can include laws, institutions, cultural messages, and policies put in place to reproduce racial inequity. A simple way of defining racism is prejudice plus power. There are different types of racism, including individual, systemic, institutional, and internalized.

Racial Literacy Strategies to Help Understand Race

Talk About Skin Color

Human skin can range from the darkest shades of brown to the lightest hues. We all have something called melanin in our bodies. People with more melanin have darker skin than people with less melanin.

Acknowledge Unfair Behavior and Wrong Doing

When someone is being mean and rude, it can be hurtful. When people treat others unfairly because of their skin color, that's called racism.

Encourage and Celebrate Those Who Do Good and Want a Better Society

Everyone should be proud of who they are, inside and out. The way other people treat us doesn't change who we are.

Ask Questions

When you make observations about race, ask, "Why do you think that?" This gives you a chance to hear the other person's perspective and learn something new.

Utilize the Breathe, Feel, Share Technique

This is best used when you're in a stressful situation or a moment of conflict.

Breathe

Take three deep belly breaths. This can bring your awareness away from the worries in your head and quiets your mind.

Feel

Notice how you are feeling, and think of words you might use to respond. For example: "I don't like that," "That's wrong," or "That hurts my feelings."

Share

Tell someone what happened!

