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Talking to Your Students about Race/Racism

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Who's Who



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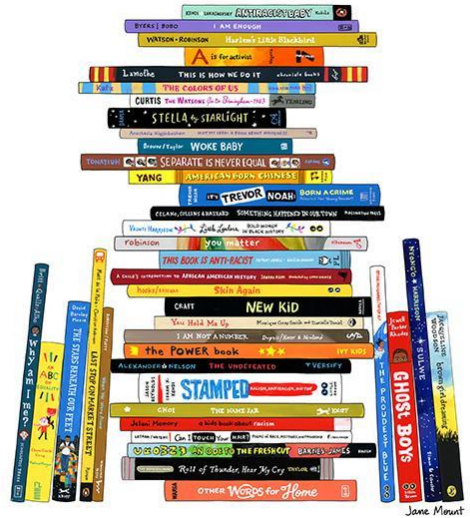


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Plan for Tonight

1. Who are we?
2. Norms for tonight
3. Why are we here & what do you want to know?
4. Definitions
5. Research on kids, race education, biases
6. Our role as grown-ups
7. Doing the work



Jane Mount



Group Norms

Association of Independent Schools in New England

- Honor confidentiality
- Speak from the "I" perspective
- Listen to understand vs. listen to respond
- Accept the speaker's viewpoint as true for the speaker in the moment
- Manage both intent and impact
- Be fully present | Take risks and participate
- Lean into discomfort | Be willing to have the tough, candid, caring, courageous conversation
- Accept non-closure





Why Are We Here?

- It is never too late to talk to kids about racism
- Silence perpetuates the problem
- Talking about race/racism can feel hard
- We may not be experts, but we can support one another
- What do you want to know?



Definitions

Racism - A system of unfair advantage based on race; “racism is a marriage of racist policies and racist ideas that produces and normalizes racial inequities” (Kendi)

White Supremacy - A belief **system** that is grounded in the lie of white superiority. It shapes our social structures and systems.



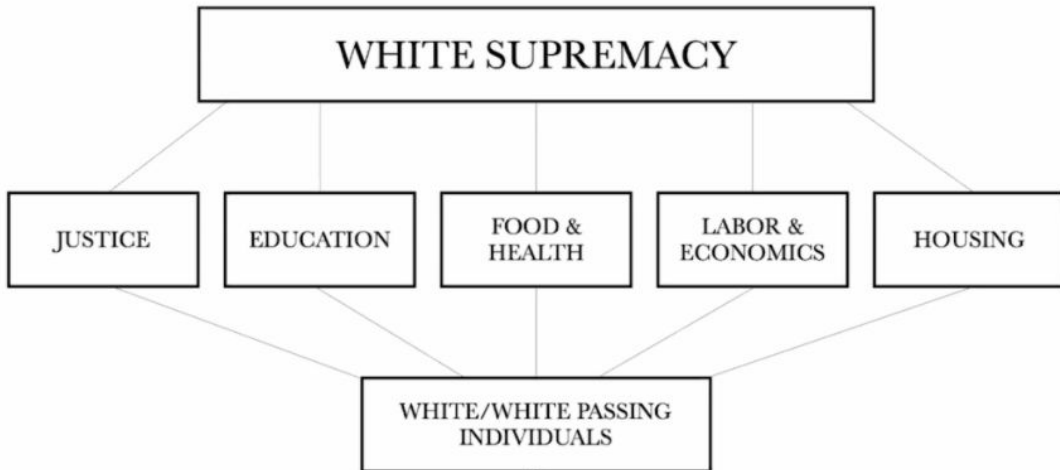
Antiracism - A lifelong practice of naming and opposing racist and white supremacist systems

BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, People of Color

AAPI - Asian American Pacific Islander



White Supremacy Affects Everything



“To grow up in America is for racist ideas to constantly be rained on your head, to have no umbrella and you don’t even know you’re wet”

—Ibram X. Kendi

Blackness is not a problem, *racism* is the problem





Developmental Research

Infants as young as **3 months**, show preference for same-race faces¹

Before 3, toddlers use race to choose playmates²

Children as **young as 2** use race to “reason” peoples’ behaviors²



Racial bias/prejudice appears explicitly by **age 4**²



Avoiding the Elephant

- Parents/grown ups assume racial understanding/bias/readiness to talk is **5 years behind** where kids are³
- Avoidance sends a message - **race/racism is taboo**, not to be discussed, not their issue, etc
 - while students are sponges, they don't automatically pick up on our behavior (passive vs active)





Our Role as Grown-Ups

"We need to recognize that we live in a dangerously racist society and the way we protect our children is by talking to them."

—Dr. Ibram Kendi

- Racism is harmful to the health, happiness and future of ALL children
- Students are vulnerable to this racist world, when we don't talk to and educate them
- Racism is not a complex topic - it's simple
 - **Undoing racism is the complex topic and work!**
- We can't wait for other people to have this conversation with our children



So how do we take action?

10 Tips for Talking About Race (from EmbraceRace/MomsRising.org)

1. Start Early! Start Now - it's never too late!
2. **Encourage your child to talk about it**
3. Be mindful of what you say and do
4. **Face and know your own biases**
5. Know and love who *you* are
 - a. heritage/family background
6. **Develop racial cultural literacy -**
7. Be honest, in age-appropriate ways, about current bigotry and oppression.
8. Tell stories of resistance and resilience
9. **Be active and not passive**
10. **Prepare for a marathon not a sprint**





Encourage the Conversation

Ask what questions kids have, ask them what they know, what they want to talk about

allow them to process and talk on difficult topics like these

Encourage openness - don't discourage or shush them

Label skin color in your regular conversations (*books, experiences, TV/movies*)

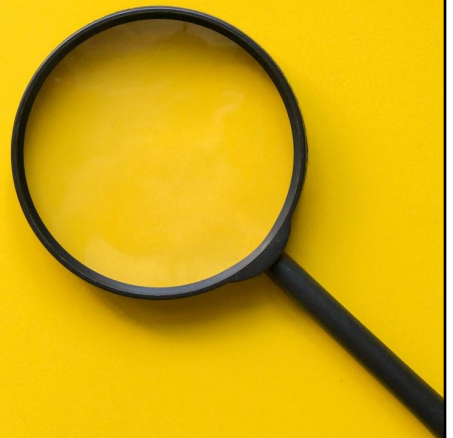
Listen to what they are really saying and reflect it back to them

Bring up current events (*in a developmentally appropriate way*)



Know your biases, do your research

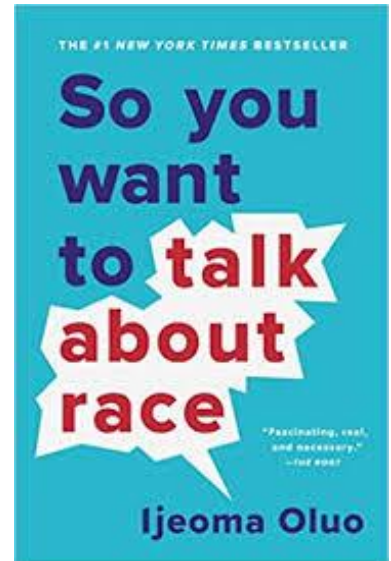
- Be willing to acknowledge your biases - we all have them!
- Let go of shame around what might be "bad" and move forward
- Share acknowledgement of your missteps with your children, as appropriate
- Listen to and learn from BIPOC voices
- Make time for these conversations with other adults
- Explore the myriad of resources: podcasts, movies, shows, articles
- Keep structural racism at the forefront in your lens





Racial/Cultural Literacy

- Diversify your library & social media stream
choose movies, books, content of, by, and about BIPOC authors & creatives
- “Visit” other cultures
- Increase exposure to diversity of all types!
food, travel (even virtual)
- Keep learning terms, updated ideas, etc.



Be Active, Not Passive

- Model an antiracist lifestyle
- Be intentional about having hard conversations:
 - *children don't always “soak up” our behaviors*
 - *connect conversations to the change you want to see and ways to do that*
- Include discussions about Anti-asian sentiment—especially now





It's a marathon...

- We can't have THE conversation on race only one time.
 - we will have it over and over, it will evolve
- It's ok to make mistakes, and keep trying, recommit.
- Wisdom from Brene Brown:
 - I'm not here to be right, I'm here to get it right.
 - Shame is not a social justice tool.
 - Courage requires uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure.
 - Healthy striving is ideal - perfectionism is not. Striving is imperfect and let's be ok with that.
- Let's lean on each other to help our children have a better future.



What's next?

End of this school year:

- Assessment of Inclusivity and Multiculturalism
 - Parent, student, faculty, staff discovery committees
 - Climate Survey
- Fundraising - Making Waves event
- DEI training for full faculty (EMS and HS), Erica Pernell from Shady Hill

Plans for 2021-2022

- Affinity groups for students of color and parents/guardians of students of color
- Continued faculty training and curriculum development
- Student focused training from DEI expert (orientation)



Discussions/Questions



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Inspiring Progress
Advancing Excellence

ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT
SCHOOLS IN NEW ENGLAND





Web Resources

Videos:

- [Color Blind or Color Brave](#) (TED talk)
- [Uncomfortable Conversations with a Black Man: On talking about color with Chip and Jo](#) (YouTube)
- [Dr. Beverly Daniel Tatum on Why the Black Kids Still Sit Together](#) (YouTube)
- [Being 12](#) radio series- [YouTube video link](#)

Articles and curriculum:

- Learning for Justice: [How to respond to Coronavirus racism](#)
- [Anti-Asian Hate - educating your children](#) (Slate.com)
- [How Political Opponents Became Enemies in the U.S.](#) (PBS)



Reading Resources

For Parents

- [Caste](#) (Isabel Wilkerson)
- [The Sum of Us](#) (Heather McGhee)
- [Minor Feelings](#) (Cathy Park Hong)
- [I'm Still Here: Black Dignity in a World Made for Whiteness](#) (Austin Channing Brown)
- [The Black Friend](#) (Frederick Joseph)
- [Me and White Supremacy](#) (Layla F. Saad)
- [So you want to talk about Race](#) (Ijeoma Oluo)

Novels

- [Little Fires Everywhere](#) (Celeste Ng)
- [Such a Fun Age](#) (Kiley Reid)

Young Adult

- [Stamped](#) (Ibram X. Kendi & Jason Reynolds)
- [Rick Riordan Presents](#)
- More options here: [Publishers Weekly anti-racist YA books](#)

Elementary

- [A Kids Book About Racism](#)
- [The Undeclared](#)
- [Eyes That Kiss in the Corners](#)
- [I Am Enough](#)
- [I Am Every Good Thing](#)



Podcast Suggestions

Racial Justice, Equity, and History

- [Seeing White](#) (Scene on Radio)
- [Code Switch](#) (NPR)
- [Throughline](#) (NPR)
- [Nice White Parents](#) (Serial & NY Times)
- [The 1619 Project](#) (NY Times)

General news and current events:

- [The Daily](#) (New York Times)
- [The Post Reports](#) (Washington Post)

Movies & shows

Documentaries

- [13th](#) (Netflix, criminal justice and race)

Shows

- [Amend](#) (Netflix, stories of fighting for equality in America based in the 14th amendment)
- [What Would You Do?](#) (ABC, how to respond to challenging situations)
- [Black-ish](#) (ABC/Hulu, family drama that addresses race, identity, and current events)



Presentation References

1. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2566511/>
2. <http://www.childrenscommunityschool.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/theyre-not-too-young-1.pdf>
3. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/08/children-notice-race>