Race Against Racism Conversation Topics

Introduction

This year, YWCA York’s Racial Justice Committee encourages Race Against Racism participants to have Courageous Conversations with one or more people as you walk or run. First, determine what level of preparedness to talk about race you and your conversation partner are. Utilize the resources for each topic to prepare for your conversation. Please honor each other, respect some of these topics’ difficulties, and commit to supporting growth instead of judgment. We hope you find value in these resources and encourage you to stay engaged in our anti-racism work. Thank you for your commitment.

Determine Your Level

Answer 'Agree' or 'Disagree' to the following statements:

a. I am comfortable talking about race.
b. I have spent a lot of time thinking about my race and how it shapes my life.
c. I seek out and grapple with current racial issues.

Determine your level based on the lowest number of statements answered 'Agree' between you and your partner:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>If you or your partner answered Disagree to all three statements, you are Level 1.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>If you or your partner answered Agree to only the first statement, you are Level 2.</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>If you or your partner answered Agree to only the first two statements, you are Level 3.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>If you and your partner answered Agree to all 3 statements, you are Level 4.</td>
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</table>
1. What are some incorrect assumptions people may have made about you, or that you have made about others, that caused emotional or physical harm?

   Resources:
   - https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatouchtest.htm
   - https://medium.com/thrive-global/9-reasons-why-making-assumptions-is-dangerous-345e8b24008c

2. What would happen if you surrounded yourself with people who looked the same, talked the same, shared the same views, and practiced the same traditions? Would this be desirable—why or why not?

   Resources:
   - https://www.theodysseyonline.com/surround-yourself-people-different

3. Were conversations about race a part of your upbringing? If so, how was the subject approached? How did the people around you talk about other races?

   Resources:
   - Active Allyship podcast, “What Were You Marinated In” https://podcasts.apple.com/ca/podcast/what-were-you-marinated-in/id1378612454?i=1000480871443
   - https://www.showaboutrace.com/

4. Do you find it difficult to find your voice when faced with racist behaviors around you? What holds you back?

   Resources:
   - https://www.ihollaback.org/bystander-resources/
   - https://www.splcenter.org/20150125/speak-responding-everyday-bigotry
   - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QijH4UAqGD8
1. **How do you have conversations about race with children?**

   **Resources:**
   - https://www.embracerace.org/resources/20-picture-books-for-2020
   - https://www.pbs.org/parents/talking-about-racism

2. **Discuss how to recognize microaggressions, the message they send, and how to apologize for impact.**

   **Resources:**
   - https://www.vox.com/2015/2/16/8031073/what-are-microaggressions
   - https://hbr.org/2020/07/when-and-how-to-respond-to-microaggressions
   - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C8xJXKYL8pU

3. **What are some challenges of working in a racially diverse environment? What do we lose or give up working in a non-diverse environment, or in ignoring diverse perspectives?**

   **Resources:**
   - https://resources.workable.com/hr-terms/diversity-definition
   - https://bannekerinstitute.fas.harvard.edu/files/bannekerinstitute/files/on_being_white.and_other_lies_baldwin_0.pdf
   - https://youtu.be/l4WB_wKdugc

4. **How could stating "I don't see color" be harmful? What is lost by not "seeing color"?**

   **Resources:**
   - https://theeverygirl.com/i-dont-see-color/

5. **"Inclusion" refers to a sense of belonging in an environment. How can you make your workplace, neighborhood, spiritual center or community more inclusive?**

   **Resources:**
   - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j7w2Gv7ueOc
6. How has your thinking of the term DIVERSITY changed over your lifetime?

Resources:
- https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/national/how-diverse-is-america/
- https://embracingdiversity.us/what-is-diversity-define-social-diversity/

Level 3

1. Have you or someone close to you ever been accused of being racist? How did it make you feel? Did it affect the way you think and act? Why or why not?

Resources:

2. When a person is the woman of color in a white environment, often she finds herself at the forefront of conversations about hair, skin, or body shape. Discuss why and the impact.

Resources:
- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/black-hair-annoying-questions_l_5c5b3d71e4b08710475a3daf
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OLQzz75yE5A

3. How do you address the topic of white privilege?

Resources:
- https://nationalseedproject.org/Key-SEED-Texts/white-privilege-unpacking-the-invisible-knapsack
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=83Ggo0BGwM
- https://youtu.be/hD5f8GuNuGQ

4. Think of a time when you realized your implicit bias. Share what happened and discuss what actions you took or didn't take.

Resources:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvI02GU8yTU
- https://equity.ucla.edu/know/implicit-bias/

5. Think of a time you may have witnessed or were a part of an uncomfortable situation regarding a person or group being targeted because of their race. How did you react then; how would you react now?
6. The statement/thought process, "Discussing race only serves to divide us. It makes people upset when they don't need to be. I just love everyone and want there to be peace." What are some of the thoughts AND emotions behind this thinking? Do you agree with the statement? Why or why not?

Resources:
- https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race/topics/race-and-racial-identity
- https://ideas.ted.com/why-saying-i-dont-see-race-at-all-just-makes-racism-worse/

Level 4

1. Why is COVID-19 more severely affecting people of color? What can be done about this issue?

Resources:

2. What work have you done to date in becoming anti-racist?

Resources:
- https://brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-ibram-x-kendi-on-how-to-be-an-antiracist/

3. Consider the efforts being made by anti-racism groups/organizations currently. What conversations have you heard about this work and what is the perceived impact?

Resources:
- https://bit.ly/3dSWt2i
- https://www.joincampaignzero.org/

4. Discuss the impact of racial trauma intergenerationally, historically, and present day.

Resources:
- https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/02/legacy-trauma
- https://medium.com/racial-battle-fatigue/racial-battle-fatigue-what-is-it-and-what-are-the-symptoms-84f79f49ee1e
- https://www.odu.edu/content/dam/odu/offices/academic-affairs/docs/racial-trauma-and-diversity.pdf