

Asians Against Racism and Hate



What is Racism? Discussion Outline

Engage in critical dialogue and reflection - talk about racism and start conversations in your community

For more support and supplementary resources, go to

<https://www.ccnctoronto.ca/asians-against-racism-and-hate>

Bold=questions to ask | **Blue=notes to guide the facilitator and conversation** | **Black=next steps**

What is racism to you? Define racism

Answer: The belief that there are inherent (natural, just a result of birth) differences between races that determine ability, which usually involves the idea that one race is superior or has the right to things (power, privilege, status, etc) over others.

- Read out all responses and bring the group to a consensus, highlighting responses most commonly shared. Add anything from the definition that may be missing so folks can come to a shared understanding

How do people experience racism everyday or in interpersonal interactions (interactions with others)?

Overt racism = explicit forms of racism (easy to spot, such as physical or verbal harassment)

Covert racism = more 'hidden' forms of racism that are not always visible. These can also be unintentional acts of racism (ex. learned racism, bias, or ignorance)

- Highlight shared responses and add anything from the definition that may be missing

How do people experience racism in different systems (ex. education, healthcare, immigration)? How does this create advantages or disadvantages for some groups?

- *If helpful, create groups to examine specific systems*

Answer: structural or systemic racism is how our society is structured to emphasize and maintain a group's dominance and power. This is done by enshrining a group's power and dominance in systems, such as through policies and laws that inform key systems like governments, the economy, education, healthcare, immigration, etc.

Structural/systemic racism upholds and maintains group's power and dominance by marginalizing or oppressing other communities.

- Highlight shared responses and add anything from the definition that may be missing

How is racism learned? Why is it important to talk about how racism is more than just 'negative feelings or assumptions' about a group, but causes real impacts that affect peoples livelihoods, advancement, self-worth, etc?

Answer: racism is learned through our systems, which are already biased and structured to create advantage for some groups, while disadvantaging others (allowing some to dominate over others, creating marginalization). Racism can also be learned from people's upbringings, social circles, and exposure to racist content whether from others, in their community, or online.

Learning about racism and its real impacts to people and communities is important to help people see how racism cannot be 'overcome' through hard work (i.e. if people work hard, educate themselves, they can move above racism and succeed). Instead, by recognizing racism as part of a system, we can challenge its 'truth' and its normalization to work towards 'unlearning' racism and bias.

What are some important considerations when having conversations with people about racism? How do we address racist comments, behaviours, or mentalities? What do we need to do in order to create a safe space for this type of discourse? What are barriers/challenges to this?

- *Opportunity for people to share their experiences encountering racism and how they navigated those experiences/their feelings regarding these experiences. If people chose not to speak out, why? Identify barriers to change*

Answer: having conversations with people and learning about racism and its sources is important to develop strategies to combat these harmful mentalities. While it can be emotionally challenging to navigate racism - especially when speaking with someone who is actively perpetuating harmful stereotypes - in order for us to have productive conversations, it is important to approach these situations with a degree of openness and empathy. Many attitudes (especially today) are learned from a young age or are from misinformation online. Meeting people where they're at (i.e. their knowledge level and understanding of racism) and moving forward from there can help us as coordinators of racial justice to understand where gaps in knowledge are and come from a place of compassion rather than hostility. Of course, it is still important to never tolerate, accept, or stand for hate.

If someone is sharing hateful comments/ideas, the safety of yourself and others affected comes first. This is not to say to avoid uncomfortable conversations, but if you sense danger, remove yourself from the situation.

- Highlight shared responses and identify conversation starters; opportunity for role play about standing up to racism in the following section

Action discussion: **How can we challenge racism on a personal and systemic level when we encounter it?**

Facilitator's guide - this question is meant to have folks recognize the importance of taking personal steps to challenge racism (rather than accepting it). While we're not encouraging folks to put themselves in dangerous situations (ex. stepping in to stop violence), the goal is to encourage them to recognize what they can do to unlearn and stand up in the face of racism, thereby challenging the status quo.

Examples:

- Questioning unconscious bias and reflecting on where it might stem from, including how it relates to colonization (in Canada and globally) and creates disadvantages for immigrants and people of colour
 - Can be on a personal and community level
 - Colonization = the process of establishing dominance, power, and control (over land and peoples) through violence, theft, restrictions, and other means
- If they witness racism or discrimination, how would they try to support the target/victim; opportunity for role play
- How can people prepare themselves to have these difficult conversations?
 - Ex. attending workshops, speaking with others, reading material, documentaries, attending rallies, art, etc.