

Summer Wellness Challenge



How to Talk to Your Kids About Anti-Racism

Directions & Script for High School & Middle School

Over the past month, as protests have taken place across the nation in response to George Floyd's death, important discussions have been raised about racism, bias and social justice. It is normal to worry that children will be exposed to these conversations on social media and in the news. By talking to your children about these difficult topics, you can fight against bigotry and empower your kids to be forces for good by cultivating the opposite—compassion and empathy.¹ Learning empathy and understanding how another person feels from their point of view is essential for creating an inclusive environment. Look for opportunities to challenge racism, show kindness and stand up for everyone's right to be treated with dignity and respect.²

Be a learner and listener – you don't need to be an expert on racism to discuss it. These conversations may be uncomfortable, but it is important that we have the difficult and important discussions, along with the easier ones. As a caregiver, your best tools to navigating these discussions are your instincts of what your child can handle, sharing your own reactions and modeling coping skills.

Caregiver tips for navigating discussion (ages 12+)

As kids prepare to exit childhood and transition to teenagers, they cement their sense of identity, laying a foundation for who they will become. Adolescents are starting to identify and develop their own values and may developmentally fail to see situations in their full complexity.³ Keeping open lines of communication with your child around anti-racism and the current world events can help them gain a deeper understanding. They may know more than you are aware and have strong feelings on the topic.

1. Identify what they know – gain understanding of how they feel and what they know.⁴

- What do you know about racism and discrimination?
- What have you heard on the news, social media, TV and from friends?
- What are your current values or beliefs on what you are hearing and seeing in the news?
- Look for ways to keep the conversation going.

2. Ask questions of what they think and introduce them to different perspectives to help expand their understanding.⁵

- Discuss events in the news and look for other opportunities to spark discussion.
- Stereotypes are oversimplifications, let's talk about your perspective on this.
- If your child has a different view, clarify you don't condone bias or stereotypes: 'I don't think that way, and I don't think what you're saying is respectful.' or 'I used to think that way, but then I read ____ or learned ____.'⁶

3. Encourage action – Some may feel a need to act, supporting this can provide a sense of control.⁷

- Engaging in activism provides a sense of agency and feeling of contributing and connecting with others.⁸
- Action can be as simple as an act of kindness or making time for self-care to help manage difficult emotions.
- Being active on social media is important for many teenagers – online activism can be an active way to respond and engage with racial issues.⁹ Be sure to discuss your families ground rules around social media use and being safe in a virtual environment.

^{1,3,6,8} Arnold-Ratliff, K. (n.d.). Anti-Racism for Kids: An Age-by-Age Guide to Fighting Hate. Retrieved from <https://www.parents.com/parenting/better-parenting/advice/how-to-teach-your-kids-to-fight-hate-an-age-by-age-guide/>

^{2,4,5,7,9} Sidwel, M., & Mahanti, S. (n.d.). Talking to your kids about racism. Retrieved from <https://www.unicef.org/parenting/talking-to-your-kids-about-racism>

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Activity: Watch the Video, [“What A Group of College Students Learned from An Experiment on Privilege”](#) (5:07 minutes)

Video Discussion

The content discussed in the video may have brought up some challenging emotions. Here are some discussion points on how to have a conversation as a family.

- What was it like to watch people move forward and backwards based on the questions asked?
- How do you think the participants felt during the activity by physically representing their privilege or marginalization in front of their peers?
- How would you feel if you participated in this activity?
- Where do you think you would end up in the final position if you were participating? Why?
- What was your biggest take away from watching the video? Why did that stand out to you the most?
- How does this activity reflect the different experiences that people in our community and larger society experience around privilege and disadvantages? What are your associated feelings?
- How can you use what you learned today to shift your perspective, have more empathy and understanding of yourself and others?
- What did you think about the student’s responses about their final position (front or back)?
- Were there questions asked that you did not consider being a part of privilege before this activity?
- Have your views shifted in any way after watching this video? If yes, how?

For more information visit www.bchd.org/summerchallenge. Share your family completing the challenges on social media using #BeachCitiesSummerChallenge.