SPRINGBOARDS FOR DISCUSSING CONTEMPORARY RACISM

This page contains springboards for you to dive into a discussion of contemporary racism and ethnocentrism. Feel free to discuss the questions in any order or create springboards of your own. The key thing is not to answer all the questions, but to have a good discussion in which everyone participates.

1. How would you define racism? Can people of color be racist?

2. Why is climate change a racial justice issue?

3. Although old-style racism and the use of racial slurs have declined in many countries, subtler forms of racism and implicit bias persist. Is this change an improvement?

4. Is it okay to use the color-based term "Black" rather than "African American"? What about using the term "White" to describe European Americans?

5. Is it okay to describe people of color as "non-White"? What about calling people who identify as female, nonbinary, or intersex "non-male"?

6. Is it better to use the term "Asian-American" instead of "Oriental," and if so, what is offensive about the term "Oriental"?

7. What are the main differences between the labels "Hispanic," "Chicano," "Latino," "Latinx," and "Latine?"

8. Although many people are quick to detect and condemn instances of racial prejudice, White privilege often goes undetected. What explains this difference?

9. If profiling people on the basis of race is wrong, is it also wrong to profile on the basis of gender? For instance, is it wrong for a woman walking alone at night to switch to the other side of the street when passing a male stranger?

10. In cases of adoption, should agencies try to match the race of children and parents, or should adoptions be carried out in a race-blind manner?

11. Is it wrong to attend religious services that include only members of your own race?

12. On college campuses, does the existence of Black, Latine, and Asian student affinity groups and housing combat racism, reinforce separatism, both, or neither?

13. Does a college course title such as "Black Intellectuals" reduce or reinforce racial stereotypes?

14. What is the ideal degree of integration to have in society, and what should be done if there are racial differences in what people consider ideal?

[From UnderstandingPrejudice.org]