



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Supporting a Positive Racial Identity for  
Black, Indigenous, and Other Children of Color  
in Transracial Placements with White Parents

September 2022



**Adopt US Kids**

*Together we hold their future*

# Part 1: Setting the stage

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This guide is designed to help parent group leaders facilitate discussions with their groups about their responsibilities as they parent children of color. These discussions will specifically help white parents and caregivers understand their critical role in supporting children who are adopted or fostered transracially in the development of a positive racial identity.

In Part 1, we discuss the legacy of systemic racism in America, both past and present. We then define racial identity and how it is developed. We acknowledge that white identity is a racial identity and explain why caregivers need to explore their own racial identity.

In Part 2, we discuss the reality of white privilege and look at how white privilege affects us at home, in the community, and over the course of a lifetime.

In Part 3, we discuss racial identity work in action.

Following each discussion, we launch into tools for group members to use in exploring their responsibilities as transracial parents.

These can be challenging discussions. The discussions should be held over multiple meetings. Group leaders should consider members' needs and the level of comfort they have with one another. Each time you return to the guide for discussion, debrief what was discussed at the prior meeting. Consider suggesting readings, videos, or podcasts between meetings to either expand on a concept you covered or jumpstart the conversation for a future meeting.

## Before you start

Conversations of race and racism are complex, emotional, and can be quite challenging if your group is not ready to engage in them. **We strongly recommend that you and your group members engage in foundational anti-racist education before starting these conversations.**

Also, for racially diverse groups, understand that these conversations have the potential to put members of your group who are Black, Indigenous, or other people of color (BIPOC) in a position of “content experts” without their permission or desire to be in that role. Check in with the BIPOC members of your group before moving forward

with this discussion. If your group is not racially diverse, it's important to discuss how group members are proactively connecting with foster/adoptive parents of color, as these connections are vital for their children's development of positive racial identity.

With the above considerations in mind, it may be helpful to ask the following readiness questions of yourself and your group members before engaging in this discussion:

- Do all group members agree that race has real effects on people's experiences and opportunities?
- Do all members agree that a "colorblind" approach to race is problematic?
- Do members understand that children have a right to experience their racial and ethnic heritages and cultures?
- Do members understand that children need adult role models of their race and ethnicity to help develop a positive sense of self?

If there is disagreement about any of the above, we recommend that you and your group engage in anti-racism education before having this discussion or using this discussion guide. Consider getting started with this reading list (<https://www.wbur.org/news/2020/06/17/reading-list-on-race-for-allies>) from National Public Radio or engaging a trainer on anti-racism.

In addition, for this discussion to be meaningful, group members need to trust each other and believe that group agreements will be maintained. If you're not sure that your group is ready for a discussion on racial identity, engage the group in some trust-building exercises during several meetings before engaging in this discussion.

## Facilitation guidance

You've assessed your group's readiness and determined it is appropriate to begin. Now, you can prepare to facilitate this discussion. Here are some tips to facilitate this conversation safely and effectively.<sup>1</sup> We encourage you to revisit these tips as you work through the guide.

- **Prepare for the discussion.** We recommend reading through this guide ahead of time. Familiarize yourself with the content and identify the areas where you anticipate that your group may have trouble.

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about effective meeting facilitation, including information on setting group norms, please read the AdoptUSKids publication, *4 Keys to Effective Meeting Facilitation for Support Group Leaders*. <https://professionals.adoptuskids.org/4-keys-to-effective-meeting-facilitation-for-support-group-leaders/>



- **Take your time.** Do not try to make it through this entire discussion in a meeting or two. We split each discussion area into specific topics. The order in which you address each topic depends on the needs of your group and the timing of issues that your members raise. These are complex conversations. Make sure you give the discussions enough time for people to think, talk, and grow.
- **Help participants move from discussion to action.** The caregivers in your group may need help in moving beyond this discussion to practicing these skills in their lives. Consider asking these questions whenever your group returns to this conversation after a break:
  - a. Did you use anything you learned in the last discussion? If so, what? If not, how could we be more intentional after today’s discussion to use the material we learn?
  - b. What did you do this past week/month to intentionally build relationships with adults from your child’s racial or ethnic community? What ideas do you have to continue building meaningful relationships with those from your child’s community?
  - c. What did you do this past week/month to intentionally build a positive racial identity in your child?

These may be hard questions to answer at first, and that’s OK. The point is to continually remind your group that this is not just a discussion. We need to move from talking and learning to action as we parent.

- **Leave your judgment behind and ask group members to do the same.** Some parents or caregivers may experience guilt, shame, denial, or resistance during these discussions. This may be especially difficult if they have not been prioritizing their children’s— or their own—healthy racial identity. They may have been told that being “colorblind” is the right approach and that the love of a family is all children need. They may also be nervous to talk about race, racism, and biases. Remind them that we all do the best we can with the information and life experiences we have. We are all at different places in our racial identity journeys and can take steps forward from where we are.
- **Be prepared to challenge.** Some group members may resist or reject the concept of white privilege based on their past experiences with trauma, economic hardship, or other ways they have been marginalized. You may have to challenge beliefs and assumptions about the difference between invisible barriers to success and those that are visible to all, such as skin color. Help participants make room for the emotions related to this work while reinforcing the importance of recognizing white privilege and the impact it has.

- **Be encouraging.** Remind the group that we come together with different experiences that have shaped us, and that we should assume participants have the will—and ability—to do more. Also, be aware of emotional distress that may occur and provide supportive feedback as needed. Rely on group agreements or norms established by your members.

## Topic 1: Setting expectations for emotional safety

### Say

Conversations about race, racism, and white privilege can be extremely difficult for many people. Feelings of guilt, shame, and defensiveness are expected and need to be anticipated and addressed. We can also expect there to be differences in experiences and opinions within the group. For this group to engage in honest, emotionally-authentic, and growth-oriented conversations about race, racism, white privilege, and the impact on the children we love, we must feel a level of emotional safety. The first step is for all participants to engage in some agreed-upon group norms.

### Ask

What are the norms we, as a group, want to set for these conversations?

What do you need from me, the group leader, during these conversations? What do you need from each other?

How will we ensure that we are both authentic and nonjudgmental in these discussions?

### **Prompts:**

- *Agree that everyone is in a different place in their journey and that as a community, we can have challenging discussions with one another without judgment.*
- *Acknowledge that everyone comes from a different place and has different experiences that affect their worldview about this topic. To learn, we must be willing to actively listen to those with different experiences from our own.*
- *Acknowledge that the group should be a safe place to share thoughts and feelings and that this authentic sharing is how members can learn and grow*
- *Default to asking questions to probe for understanding, rather than making assumptions.*

- *Get comfortable with discomfort. These conversations are likely to make us uncomfortable. Discomfort may show up as sadness, guilt, defensiveness, anger, or any number of other emotions. It's natural to want to get rid of these feelings. Instead, commit to being self-aware and checking in with yourself about your feelings. Ask yourself where feelings are coming from and try to sit with the discomfort. We will learn more if we are open to uncomfortable feelings and can follow where they lead us.*
- *Refer back to the group norms that members created and agree to any additional norms for this discussion.*

### **Facilitator's note:**

*Be aware that it will be difficult for many participants to realize and grapple with the knowledge that they may not be meeting their children's needs in building healthy racial identities. It's essential that your members know the group is there to support one another in their mutual growth on behalf of their children.*

## **Topic 2: Systemic racism in America**

### **Say**

Talking about racism is not easy, but as parents of children who will experience racism, it is a crucial conversation that we must have. To help us understand the role that racism plays in our daily lives, we must start by understanding its root causes and deep connections in every American system. To get started, we are going to watch a brief video that helps explain how racist policies and practices throughout history continue to affect people of color today.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX\\_Vzl-r8NY&t=3s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vX_Vzl-r8NY&t=3s)

### **Ask**

What are your reactions to this video?

Do you feel like this is an accurate representation of race in America? Why or why not?

Are there other historical events that are missing from this video? What else would you have included?

**Prompt:**

- *For example, it does not include the ongoing overrepresentation of children of color—specifically Black, Indigenous, and Latinx children—in foster care.<sup>2</sup>*

Did any part of this video make you uncomfortable?

**Prompt:**

- *Some white people may be made uncomfortable because the video shows the white people with no obstacles and carrying substantial wealth from generation to generation. This depiction can cause some white people to feel misrepresented here because their family is not wealthy and they feel that they have experienced hardship. Validate that their experience of hardship is real, but individual hardship is not the same as collective hardship that is experienced by an entire community. The video is meant to show the collective impact of racist policies and practices throughout history that have created an unequal playing field. Each person in the video is not one person, but a collective representation of their community. And white people collectively have far more wealth than people of color do collectively.<sup>3</sup>*

## Say

As parents and caregivers, one of our roles is to prepare our children for a world outside of our influence and protection. To do this, we must start by educating ourselves. Ask yourself: What do you know about the history of race and racism in this country? How has the history of race-based oppression affected opportunities for people of color today? As we gain a deeper understanding of the impact racism plays on our daily lives, we can better engage in meaningful conversations with our children, especially as we parent children of color.

By engaging in this conversation, you are continuing to take steps toward being a person who helps make the world an equitable and just place. This might be the start of your journey and that is okay. Continue to reflect on your role and ability to influence others and remember that your actions, or inactions, can have lasting implications for your children. Try to continue to commit to the journey, even when you feel stuck, angry, hurt, or overwhelmed.

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2 “Disproportionality Data,” Child Welfare Information Gateway, accessed 2022, [www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/cultural/disproportionality/data](https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/cultural/disproportionality/data).

3 Neil Bhutta, Andrew Chang, Lisa Dettling, and Joanne Hsu, “Disparities in Wealth by Race and Ethnicity in the 2019 Survey of Consumer Finances,” *FEDS Notes*. Washington: Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System (2020): <https://doi.org/10.17016/2380-7172.2797>.

### **Facilitator's note:**

*For more resources on understanding the role of racism in America over time, check out the Smithsonian's 158 Resources to Understand Racism in America (<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/158-resources-understanding-systemic-racism-america-180975029/>).*

*Watch for participants becoming defensive, argumentative, or emotional. Encourage everyone to try to accept feelings of discomfort and consider where those feelings are coming from. You may also wish to consider dividing into multiple groups to have these discussions based on the readiness of the participants.*

### **Say**

To engage in the rest of this discussion, we need to be prepared to be uncomfortable. No one enjoys being uncomfortable, so we often do whatever we can to avoid it. But a lot can be learned when we sit with feelings of discomfort around race. We can learn more about ourselves and our communities—and become better parents to our children of color—if we can commit to experiencing discomfort rather than rejecting it.

### **Ask**

Can we commit to accepting discomfort in moving forward with this discussion?

### **Facilitator's note:**

*If your group is not yet ready to commit to leaning into uncomfortable feelings, you may need to stop this discussion and instead spend time on learning this skill. Dr. Ibram X. Kendi's book, *How To Be An Anti-Racist*, offers guidance on this topic. Consider pausing this discussion and instead read this book as a group.*

## **Topic 3: Defining identity**

### **Ask**

Could everyone offer three “I am” statements about themselves? What are the first three “I am” statements that come to mind about yourself?



Allow everyone a turn, then ask the following:

- Did your race make the top three items on your list? Why or why not?
- What comes to mind for you when you think about racial identity?
- What is your racial identity and how do you think it was formed? Has it changed over time?
- If your family is multiracial, has your racial identity changed since becoming part of a multiracial family?

## ***Do***

Bring up these responses if no one else does:

- Many white people do not think of being white as a racial identity or part of their identity.
- White is often viewed as the “default” in this country, which explains why many white people do not think of themselves as having a racial identity.
- For many, there is a fear that claiming white identity will be seen as white nationalism or supremacy.
- To have complete and real conversations about racial identity, we have to start with acknowledging that white is a racial identity.

## **Topic 4: Impact of assumptions and implicit biases**

### ***Say***

It’s important for all of us to understand how racial assumptions can lead to bias and affect identity development.

Let’s watch this 14-minute TED Talk from *Ugly Betty* star America Ferrera:

[https://www.ted.com/talks/america\\_ferrera\\_my\\_identity\\_is\\_a\\_superpower\\_not\\_an\\_obstacle](https://www.ted.com/talks/america_ferrera_my_identity_is_a_superpower_not_an_obstacle)

### ***Ask***

What are your first impressions of the video? What stood out for you, surprised you, or made you think about something in a new light?

Have you experienced times when any part of your identity was questioned, ignored, or stereotyped? How did you feel about that?

Has your child experienced times where their identity was questioned, ignored, or stereotyped? How did you react when this happened to them?

## **Do**

Bring up these responses if no one else does:

- Later on, we will talk more about the importance of centering the child’s experience and taking their experiences with racism seriously.
- As white parents of children of color, it’s important that we not focus on our own emotional reactions to our child’s experiences. When we react with big emotions, we make the situation about ourselves rather than about the child’s thoughts and feelings. Work to have big emotional reactions in private, away from your child, so that they don’t feel like they need to take care of you or tend to your needs. Children want to avoid hurting their parents, and so an emotional display from you may prevent them from coming to you with similar experiences in the future.
- Similarly, if you haven’t heard about your child’s experiences like this, it doesn’t mean they haven’t happened. It must be OK for our children to want to talk with other trusted adults about these experiences, and it’s likely more comfortable for them to talk about racist experiences with other BIPOC people. We will discuss the importance of surrounding your child with adults who look like them later in this guide.
- Remind participants that if they feel like they’ve reacted poorly or dismissively towards their children’s experiences in the past that we are here to learn and to improve. We do the best with the information we have at the time, and it’s important that we not get mired in guilt over how we’ve misstepped in the past. We must focus on growing and doing better in the future.

### **Facilitator’s note:**

*Be prepared to share your own experiences if no one else is speaking. If you have trouble eliciting comments or sharing from the group at this stage, that may mean that you need to stop this discussion and do more educational groundwork to get the group ready for this conversation. Try setting the stage by watching this 12-minute TED Talk, “What It Takes to Be Racially Literate” ([https://www.ted.com/talks/priya\\_vulchi\\_and\\_winona\\_guo\\_what\\_it\\_takes\\_to\\_be\\_racially\\_literate](https://www.ted.com/talks/priya_vulchi_and_winona_guo_what_it_takes_to_be_racially_literate)). Two recent high school graduates discuss the need to look at racial literacy with both head and heart.*

## Ask

Did America Ferrera make you think about times when you may have made assumptions about other people based on your ideas about race, gender, economic status, immigrant status, sexual orientation, physical appearance, or ability? How does reflecting on this make you feel?

### **Facilitator's note:**

*Give members “permission” to have made mistakes in the past and an invitation to move forward without guilt or shame. It may be helpful to share your own past mistakes on this topic.*

### **Prompts:**

- *Here's an analogy that may help: Think of the culture we are a part of as the air we all breathe. Everyone in that society is breathing the same air, likely not even thinking about what they are breathing in. So if that air is polluted, no one is immune from the effects of that contamination. One of the ways that our culture's air is polluted is by racism. Even if you were taught that racial assumptions and biases are wrong, and you are working to do better, you still receive racist messages all the time as a function of being in this culture. We're all still breathing that polluted air.*
- *Recognizing our past mistakes is an important step toward growth and change.*

## Do

Share [Handout 1: Ladder of Inference](#) with participants and facilitate a discussion about how the ladder's rungs build upon one another.

## Say

The Ladder of Inference is a widely accepted model that is used to understand how a person uses what they see or experience to either support a belief or challenge it. Research shows that our brains are wired to file away and keep information that supports our beliefs, and quickly reject information that contradicts our beliefs.<sup>4</sup> Let's take a look at this video that explains the Ladder of Inference and how it can affect our beliefs and behavior.

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<sup>4</sup> Chris Argyris, *Overcoming Organizational Defenses: Facilitating Organizational Learning* (London: Pearson, 1990).

## *Do*

Watch the video, “The Ladder of Inference,” as a group.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XA94chykm-c>

## *Ask*

Have any of you seen this ladder before? Does anyone have questions about the example used in the video that highlights how our beliefs influence our observations and interpretations? Does anyone have any other questions about how the ladder works before we dig deeper?

## *Say*

A fundamental point here is the feedback loop that’s created in our minds. When we interpret something that confirms our beliefs, it makes our beliefs stronger, which, in turn, makes us more likely to only observe selected information. This continues to solidify our beliefs, and on and on up the ladder.

Understanding how this process works is really important. We have to understand where assumptions come from so that we can become aware of our own biases and try to stop this feedback loop in its tracks. We need to continually come back to our original observations to understand and challenge our belief systems, especially those that result in negative actions or interpretations.

Remember, we all breathe the same polluted air of our culture’s racist ideas and beliefs. We receive racist messages all the time, just as a function of being a part of this society. Even if you know that racist beliefs and actions are wrong, the Ladder of Inference will still cause you to make incorrect assumptions based on race—which can lead to racist beliefs and racist actions—unless the feedback loop is disrupted. Disrupting this feedback loop takes a lot of work and practice.

## *Do*

Ask an individual member, or the group as a whole, to create a Ladder of Inference that could result in a harmful, racist assumption. Help to guide them in identifying each of the “rungs” on the ladder with a statement or action that demonstrates that “rung.” Starting statements can be as simple or as complex as your group is comfortable with.

**Facilitator's note:**

*If the group is able to engage in this activity successfully, facilitate the discussion about each rung, ending with a discussion about how an individual could disrupt the ladder. If not, use the scenario below, walking the group through the feedback loop.*

**Say**

Consider the following example of how the Ladder of Inference can cause harmful, racist assumptions and actions if left unchecked. For this example, we'll see how a racist stereotype—even one that we don't think we believe—can permeate our thinking processes and affect the decisions we make.

- Racist message that we receive from society: “Black people are lazy.”
- At your job, you are giving a presentation in front of colleagues.
- Observation and selected data: One of your colleagues, who is Black, keeps looking at their phone during your presentation. You don't notice the times she was not looking at her phone and you don't notice other colleagues who also looked at their phones.
- Assumption: You decide that this colleague was looking at their phone because they are not engaged in your presentation.
- Conclusion: You decide that they are often disengaged at work.
- Belief: You think that this person is lazy and not a good employee.
- Action: You complain about your colleague's laziness to other coworkers, or perhaps even to their supervisor or human resources. The working environment is now much more challenging for that person.

**Say**

Of course, there are many possible reasons why your colleague could have been looking at their phone during your presentation. But the Ladder of Inference, with racist messaging as its fuel, took you down a path that caused someone else harm. And a Black person accused of laziness or disengagement at work has much more potential to be harmed by your actions than a white person because of the initial racist stereotype.

Also, notice that the belief that you end up with after the Ladder of Inference isn't “all Black people are lazy.” It's “*this person* is lazy.” This is part of what allows many people to



believe that they are not capable of racist ideas, assumptions, or actions because they perceive that they are making decisions or assessments about individual people rather than groups of people.

## Ask

What are some ways you can disrupt the Ladder of Inference using this example to better prevent you from coming to racist conclusions and taking harmful actions?

### Prompts:

- *Observation: Question your initial observations. Are they really looking at their phone or something else? Are they taking notes on their phone about your presentation?*
- *Selected data: Was this person the only person on their phone, or were they the only one you noticed? Question yourself as to why that is. Remember, beliefs inform which data our brains keep and which data our brains reject.*
- *Meaning: There are many possible reasons why this person was looking at their phone, like worrying over a pending call from their doctor or their child's school or checking on the status of another important work project. Also, sometimes someone's introversion or discomfort with eye contact can be misconstrued as disengagement. Further, in some cultures, lack of eye contact is normal and may even be a sign of respect. Practice choosing the explanation that causes the least harm and assumes the best intent. Or, you could simply ask them privately if everything is OK.*
- *Assumption: Even if that person was on their phone and not paying attention, does that mean that they do this routinely? How sure are you that you can trust the pattern that you think you see? As we've established, we select the data that confirms our biases and reject the data that doesn't.*
- *Conclusion: As we go further up the ladder, we are getting farther and farther from the observation that gave rise to these thoughts in the first place. We may need more help from our friends to help us check our thought processes. Rely on support from trusted people that don't accept what you say at face value. Friends who ask you questions like "What makes you think that?" are important.*
- *Belief: Disrupting beliefs is hardest because beliefs don't rely on any evidence at all. We often selectively see things that reinforce our beliefs and dismiss things that don't. Disengagement is not laziness, and neither trait would necessarily mean that the person isn't doing their job well. You can disrupt potentially racist beliefs by remembering that we all are affected by racist messages and ideas. Try your best to take the shame and*

*guilt out of experiencing a racist thought. Again: we all experience these as a function of living in this society. What matters most is that we disrupt these ideas when they occur, and especially before they lead to action.*

- *Action: Before taking any action, go back through all of these steps on the ladder again and engage in deeper introspection. Ask others who don't know the person or the circumstances what they would do in your shoes. Seek out people who will not just agree with you, but who will encourage you to think critically. It will also be important to remember that those you consult will not be able to speak on behalf of entire communities and should not be asked to do so. Think about the potential consequences of any actions you take and ask yourself if you are comfortable being the cause of any of those consequences.*

## Say

These strategies are easier said than done. Our brains trust our eyes and ears more than they should sometimes and it can be hard to interrupt our own thought processes. Having accountability buddies—especially those on a similar anti-racist journey as you—can be helpful as you check your assumptions and interrupt these feedback loops.

It may not always be possible to run a situation by someone else, though. Here are some tips that might be helpful for all of us to hold ourselves more accountable and disrupt our internal ladders of inference:

- Be aware of your own limitations and blind spots. We all have different life experiences, which means every one of us is going to have situations that we simply don't understand as well as someone with different experiences than us. Practice saying phrases like, "I don't think I know enough about these circumstances to form an opinion," and "I trust those with more experience than me in this area."
- Default to questioning your own assumptions. Develop a practice of asking yourself questions like, "Why do I think that?" or "Where did that come from?" It's always a good rule of thumb to take a moment and examine your thought process.
- Easy answers should usually be questioned. If your thought process leads you to a quick and elegant answer that explains everything succinctly, you should probably question it. The world is a messy place and people are complex.

## Ask

What will be the most challenging part of interrupting the Ladder of Inference for you?

### **Prompts:**

- *As people share what they think will be challenging, ask the rest of the group members for ideas about ways they can support each other through these challenges. Can group members use each other as accountability buddies?*
- *Make sure to acknowledge that this type of practice requires self-awareness and self-reflection skills. Practicing being aware of our own thoughts and feelings may be an important step for people who aren't used to questioning their own thought processes or who think that observations are clear and absolute.*

## **Topic 5: The impact of language**

### **Share:**

Put these quotes on different pages of a flip chart and share them with participants.

“Words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless.”—Mother Teresa

“Adopted kids have big ears and vulnerable hearts.”—April Dinwoodie, transracial adoptee

### **Say**

We all should be aware of the power of language. For foster and adoptive families, it is essential that we become aware of and respond to both open and hidden messages we may hear. Often, those biases and hurtful stereotypes are couched within jokes or offhand comments.

Let's think about times when we have heard other white people speak in a derogatory way about people of color. Did we think, “It's only a joke,” or “There was no harm meant in that?” Now let's imagine having our child in the room when those things were said. Is the action you would take upon hearing racist statements or seeing racist actions different if your child is with you?

### **Say**

As parents and caregivers, it's very important that we are alert to times when assumptions based on biases are raised, spoken, or acted upon and call them out for our children. They will look to us for confirmation that they—and others who look like them—are valued. **This is important whether or not our child is actually present.**

Ignoring discriminatory words and actions is not an option for us as caregivers and parents of children of color. It sends a message to your child that you don't recognize or care about such micro or macroaggressions, or they don't matter or affect the child, or that you agree with those assumptions.

Dismissing what was said or minimizing it can be incredibly damaging to your child. Parents have a responsibility to validate the impact of language. Telling their children to “just ignore it,” or saying the person “didn't really mean anything” sends a message that keeping the peace is more important to the parent than responding to their child's needs.

### **Facilitator's note:**

*Group members might be upset that they have ignored such language in the past. Be prepared and respond in a supportive, nonjudgmental way. Perhaps say, “We all have made mistakes without realizing it. Learning from those mistakes and doing better is what these discussions are all about!”*

### **Say**

It can be hard to confront these microaggressions, so let's practice in order to get more comfortable. Let's look at some scenarios of casual racism—or microaggressions—and think about what we could do to disrupt them or challenge them.

There will not be a perfect answer for any of these scenarios, and each of us may choose to navigate these situations differently. You can learn more about steps to disrupt racial microaggressions in “How to Respond to Racial Microaggressions When They Occur” (<https://www.diverseeducation.com/opinion/article/15106837/how-to-respond-to-racial-microaggressions-when-they-occur>) by Drs. Frank Harris III and J. Luke Wood.

### **Do**

Distribute [Handout 2: Scenarios](#).

### **Scenario 1**

Your manager asks you to give a big presentation for some important clients. She says that she'd rather you do it instead of your coworker because your coworker's accent makes her difficult to understand and she can sometimes be too “aggressive” in her style. How could you respond to this?

**Prompts:**

- *Ask your manager to clarify what her concerns are, pushing for specifics.*
- *Suggest that it would have a greater impact as a co-presentation, insisting that you want to partner with your colleague to create and deliver it.*
- *Respond that you would like to believe that your manager and the company are truly equal opportunity employers and ask how her decision is actually supporting that value.*
- *If this is an ongoing issue, point out to your manager that you do not feel comfortable being a party to what feels like implicit bias.*

**Scenario 2**

Your child, who is Black, is playing at the park with a friend and you are visiting with the friend's mother. You mention a recent visit with your child's birth family and how fun it was for your child. The other parent says, "Oh, I didn't realize you have to still visit with those people. Is that safe? Isn't there a lot of violence over in that part of the city?" You are unsure if your child heard what was said. What would you do?

**Prompts:**

- *There is likely a complex combination of biases at play in this scenario, related to race, class, and assumptions about birth parents. We as white parents may feel better equipped to confront the components of this interaction that have less to do with race and more to do with the other biases we recognize in this encounter. While it's certainly important to confront the other biases here, it is vital that our Black, Indigenous, and other children of color see their parents confronting racist ideas and beliefs. If we address only the birth parent bias in this interaction, our children may be left feeling like the rest of this assumption—that the community they are from is violent—is true. It is extremely harmful for a child to believe that their racial group is prone to violence. This will prevent them from forming a positive racial identity.*
- *If you aren't sure, assume your child heard the interaction. Assume your child is right next to you when situations like this happen, even when they aren't. This gives you practice for a time in the future when your child will be present, and it can serve as a helpful reminder to you about why it's critical to not shy away from difficult conversations about race.*
- *Often, a simple "I don't understand, what do you mean by that?" or "I don't find that to be true at all, what makes you say that?" can stop this type of conversation in its tracks. If you feel this friend may be open to hearing this, consider sharing why that's a harmful*



*thing to say, especially in your child's presence, and how that can harm their self-esteem and positive racial identity. You could use the air pollution metaphor to help them understand that what they said was based on a racist stereotype about the prevalence of violence in Black communities.*

- *Remind yourself that, though this is a difficult conversation to have that may cause you emotional distress, it's emotional distress that you are preventing your child from experiencing, either now or in the future.*
- *Depending on how the person reacts, it may be necessary to leave with your child. A difficult truth of transracial parenting for white parents is that many of our existing relationships may not be healthy for our children. We must examine if the relationships we have harm our children in order to establish healthy boundaries to protect our children from harm. For the relationship described in this scenario, perhaps this means that your child is not allowed to go over to this friend's house if you are not present. Or it may be necessary to no longer interact with this family if they continue to say microaggressions like this one.*

You will have an opportunity to work more with these ideas later in these discussions.

## Topic 6: Working to be culturally aware and open to learning more

### Say

Purposeful cultural curiosity beyond your own or your child's cultural roots is important to building a healthy racial identity for everyone in your family. This takes intention and effort that will continue over time.

### Ask

How have you improved your understanding of other cultures? How have you learned about the history of Black, Latinx, Asian, and American Indian/Alaska Native people in the US? Let's brainstorm some strategies together to help us all learn more.

### Say

If you are white, it is important that you deeply consider our country's history related to race over time. Think about how history is shaped by who tells the story. In this country, history is often told only from the white perspective.

As a white parent, your willingness to grapple with the experiences of other cultures and the impact of their history is an active demonstration of being an ally. This will support your child's positive racial identity development.

While it may be difficult, it is important to reflect on how being white in America inherently comes with privileges not afforded to people of color. Further, those privileges may be available to your children of color when they are in your company, but not when they are on their own.

These are complex conversations and we will dive deeper during our next meetings together. For now, take some time to reflect on what we've discussed today (or over the past couple of meetings) and practice self-care as well. If you can, pick a couple of videos, podcasts, or readings from the resource list and, if you are willing, be prepared to share what you've learned when we meet again.

### ***Facilitator's note:***

*As you end Part 1, it's necessary to take a break from the conversation. Consider entering into Part 2 of this discussion at a later meeting. **We advise against engaging in this entire guided discussion during a single group meeting.***

# Part 2: Understanding white privilege

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## Facilitation guidance

As you begin Part 2, take some time to check in with everyone about how the discussions have felt so far. Remind the group of the norms you established at the beginning. Ask if there are any additional norms they would like to add or if there are any existing norms that they think the group needs to do better at honoring.

Remember conversations about race and racism are complex, emotional, and can be quite challenging if your group is not ready to engage in them. It may be helpful to check in with a co-facilitator about how this discussion is going and if there is a need to slow down, go over some content again, or disengage from this discussion until the group has done more anti-racist education. It may be necessary to take a longer break from this discussion if:

- Members are hesitant to contribute to the conversation.
- You have disagreements as a group about the points of any of the discussions in Part 1, especially if you've reviewed them multiple times.
- Some members are expressing that they don't feel emotionally safe moving forward with the discussion in its current state.

The next topic the group will discuss is white privilege. For some white people, it can be difficult to understand how they benefit from white privilege because the benefits may feel invisible to them. It may be necessary to assure participants that white privilege is real, even if it is not immediately apparent to them, and refer to additional resources to learn more about the subject. Additionally, participants may need to hear that benefitting from white privilege does not mean that they haven't experienced hardship in their lives. If participants are having a hard time accepting that white privilege exists, this may be another indicator that this discussion needs to be paused until more anti-racist education has been done.

## Topic 1: Defining white privilege

### Say

The phrase “white privilege” was first coined by activist and scholar Peggy McIntosh in 1988 in her paper “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” She described white privilege in terms of the unspoken advantage that the dominant culture has over people of color.

In other words, power, benefits, and other advantages are distributed in unequal ways among the different groups in society. Specifically, with respect to white privilege, the advantage rests with white people.

### Do

Distribute copies of the article “What is White Privilege?” You may wish to have families read this article prior to coming to the meeting. After the group has read the article, ask participants to share their thoughts and reactions.

<https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-white-privilege-5070460>

### Ask

Did anyone have an “aha” moment reading this article? Please share.

How did the article make you think differently about the term “white privilege?”

Would anyone be willing to share an experience that was somehow affected by or reflective of white privilege in action? For example, have you observed a situation where someone had an advantage due to white privilege? Or would anyone be willing to share how they have personally benefited in some way from white privilege?

### Say

Let’s watch this short video of two women, adopted transracially, discussing their experiences of something they refer to as “white privilege by osmosis” (<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=272912760587477>).

Angela Tucker is host of The Adopted Life (<https://www.angelatucker.com/>) and The Adoptee Next Door (<https://www.angelatucker.com/podcast>). In this clip, she is speaking

with Torie about what it's like to lose the white privilege by association as they become increasingly independent from their white parents.

## **Do**

Allow enough time for participants to sit with this concept and be okay with any discomfort. It is possible that this is not an idea they have considered before; hearing Angela and Torie talk about their real experiences can stir up some strong feelings.

## **Ask**

What are your reactions to the idea of white privilege by osmosis?

Have you seen this effect with your own children? Is anyone willing to share an experience?

What can we do now, while our children are with us, to prepare them for when they are on their own and less protected by our white privilege?

### **Prompts:**

- *Be aware of those places, spaces, and events where your children may be experiencing white privilege by association when they are with you. Start working on decreasing your family's presence in these spaces when possible.*
- *Be proactive in your efforts to be with your children in places, spaces, and events where you are the minority race, not them.*
- *Invite people from your children's communities of origin to be a part of your community.*
- *Take the initiative in having honest conversations with your children about white privilege and racism.*
- *Be diligent in using your privilege in support of communities of color. This may mean giving up your place in spaces where decisions are being made so that a person of color can offer their ideas. It can also mean speaking up when and where you observe bias, whether implicit or explicit. Use your resources (financial, talents, contacts, networks, etc.) to support communities of color.*



# Part 3: Racial identity work in action

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## **Facilitator's note:**

*In preparation for this section, it can be helpful to have members read “Being Anti-Racist” (<https://nacac.org/resource/being-anti-racist-a-critical-way-to-support-children-of-color-in-foster-care-and-adoption/>) and “In My Skin” (<https://nacac.org/resource/in-my-skin/>) and watch the webinar on Positive Identity Formation (<https://nacac.org/resource/positive-identity-formation-webinar/>). If your members are willing to do homework, assign the readings and webinar prior to beginning this section. Alternatively, you could begin the meeting by watching the webinar as a group and debriefing it together.*

## **Topic 1: Setting expectations for emotional safety; mutually agreed-upon norms for hard conversations**

### **Say**

We have talked about a lot of difficult topics and I feel like we are really learning and growing together. I want to ensure that everyone feels the same and keep that going.

First let's look at the norms we agreed on when we began. Do we feel that we have been true to them? Do they still seem like the right agreements or are there changes we need to make?

### **Do**

- Make sure you pay attention to body language as well as what is said.
- Check in with quieter members.
- Make adjustments as needed and assure everyone that the group will continue to adapt to the needs of the members.
- Have an alternative discussion planned in case members are not ready to proceed with this discussion. It's better to postpone this discussion than try to force it when your group isn't ready.

## Say

We're now going to start looking at ways we can actively help our children's positive identity development.

## Topic 2: Critical responsibilities of those who parent transracially

### Say

As parents and caregivers, we take on several responsibilities beyond providing food, shelter, and guidance. Children in adoption, foster care, or kinship care may have lost connections to their birth families, their communities, and their cultures. An essential task for parents is to support their children in developing a strong, positive sense of self and connections to their origins. For transracial parents, this is critically important.

### Do

Ask the group to read this article by Dr. Joseph Crumbley about the tasks for parents:

<https://www.nacac.org/resource/seven-tasks-for-parents/>

### **Facilitator's note:**

*We recommend having group members read the article in advance to prepare for the discussion. If this is not possible, you can read it together during the meeting.*

### Ask

Were Dr. Crumbley's observations about how children develop racial identity new to you? What did you think of his observations?

Which of his seven tasks seem most doable to you and how will you accomplish them?

Are there any tasks that you've already been successful at accomplishing? What helped you be successful?

Which tasks seem most difficult and how could you overcome any barriers?

When it comes to cultural mentors and role models, do you already have them in your life? If not, how can you add them to your life?

## Do

As a group, read the article “In My Skin,” by transracial adoptee Justice Stevens.

<https://nacac.org/resource/in-my-skin/>

## **Facilitator’s note:**

*Allow enough time for members to engage deeply in this discussion. It is entirely possible that you could fill an hour or an entire meeting on this topic.*

## Say

In the article, Justice writes about the meaningful relationships his parents had with cultural mentors, Celeste and Harriet, when he was a child. Think about who your children will speak about in this way when they are adults. None of us can be sure of which relationships will be impactful to our children. But as caregivers who are parenting transracially, we have an added responsibility to ensure that we and our children have meaningful relationships with adults from our child’s racial or ethnic community.

## Ask

How have you—or how do you plan to—formed meaningful relationships with adults from your child’s racial or ethnic community?

## **Prompt:**

- *Making new friends as adults is hard! One of the best things we can do is join groups that are doing activities that we enjoy, while being mindful about the racial or ethnic make-up of those groups.*

What can you do to deepen the existing relationships that you have with adults from your child’s racial or ethnic community?

## Say

For relationships to be meaningful, they need to be mutually beneficial. Be mindful of relationships where you may be routinely asking for their help or input, but have not

offered them anything in return. All relationships need to be tended and nurtured in order to deepen and thrive. Prioritize nurturing the relationships you have with adults from your child's community.

## Topic 3: Racial identity and broader racial justice considerations

### **Do**

Ask the group to read this article by Dr. JaeRan Kim on racial identity and racial justice.

<https://www.nacac.org/resource/the-personal-is-political-racial-identity-and-racial-justice-in-transracial-adoption/>

### **Facilitator's note:**

*We recommend having group members read the article in advance to prepare for the discussion. If this is not possible, you can read it together during the meeting.*

### **Say**

Parents have a responsibility to create an environment of physical, emotional, and psychological safety for their children that will encourage their sense of worth. Without the support, resources, and connections needed to develop a strong, positive racial identity, children of color may develop negative self-esteem or even self-loathing.

### **Ask**

What do you think about Dr. Kim's ideas? What have you been working on? What is new to you?

What more can you do to be an anti-racist and create a sense of physical, emotional, and psychological safety for your child in your family and in the world around them?

How can you incorporate more of these ideas into your family life and personal actions?

## *Do*

Allow enough time for members to engage deeply in this discussion. It is entirely possible that you could fill an hour or an entire meeting on this topic.

## **Topic 4: Navigating a sense of belonging**

### *Say*

For children placed transracially, there are additional layers to finding one's place in a family and in the broader world. First, it is important for parents to think about their own identities, access to power, and privilege. Then, they should plan for how to actively help their children develop a deeper understanding of their status, memberships, and belonging.

### *Do*

As a group, watch this clip from the Born in June, Raised in April podcast. The clip features transracially adopted person Marcus Schmidt, who talks about having to navigate the two worlds of transracial adoption.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9067kcsCJw>

### *Ask*

How does it feel to listen to Marcus share his experiences navigating the two worlds of adoption?

Have you seen this navigation play out in your family with any of your children?

Think back to the clip of Torie and Angela talking about “white privilege by osmosis.” How do you think that transition—of conditional acceptance to rejection—could affect your child? How do you think this experience will feel to them as an adult to realize that their acceptance was conditional to your presence?

How can you better prepare your child for navigating the two worlds?

What can you do to support their sense of belonging in both worlds?



### **Prompts:**

- *Try to elicit some real-life examples that families have had and brainstorm various ways that participants have or could support their children.*
- *Include a discussion of the oft-related experience of the transracially adopted person: “You act too white to be Black, but your skin is too dark for you to be white.”*
- *How is it different for a child or youth when they are with people who share their race, ethnicity, or culture of origin, compared with when they are in an all or mostly white setting?*
- *Families should have ongoing conversations about navigating the world as a person of color from the beginning and deepening the conversation according to developmental age and capacity.*
- *Families should ensure that both parents and children have cultural guides or mentors to help them navigate the two worlds.*
- *Children and youth should have ongoing and multiple opportunities to be in the “world” that they come from to increase comfort and a positive sense of identity and belonging.*

## **Topic 5: Showing your child your work to fight racism**

### **Say**

Regardless of a child’s age, it’s important that they see their parents’ commitment to anti-racist and anti-biased action. This commitment will support your child’s racial development and support your parent-child relationship far into the future.

### **Do**

Facilitate a discussion around the below questions, highlighting any anti-racist actions that families have taken and brainstorming additional ways that families can begin or expand these efforts. Be sure to bring everyone’s attention to the extensive list of resources we have provided, pointing out that the resources are organized according to the type of resource, topic, and targeted age for sharing.

### **Ask**

What are you doing now that ensures your child sees you as an anti-racist?

How have you engaged with systems (educational, law enforcement, health care, mental health, etc.) to call out and address racist practices and actions?

Are you living in a neighborhood and community that is culturally and racially diverse? Are the people you are close to from diverse communities?

Are you modeling what it looks like to have ongoing and open conversations about differences in race, adoption, and foster care, and are you having age-appropriate conversations with your children about these topics?

## Topic 6: Parental roles and responsibilities across the lifespan

### *Say*

Preparing children to be in the world as adults of color is critically important for any parent. For white parents in transracial families, the work begins on day one and deepens as the child grows. It's important for parents to think about how their child will fare when they are adults and how they can prepare for that now.

### *Do*

As a group, watch this clip from the Born in June, Raised in April podcast featuring transracially adopted person Marcus Schmidt. Marcus discusses how his mother talked to him about how the world would perceive him.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLvVpVd8TlM>

### *Ask*

What was your reaction to Marcus's mother's advice to him? Are these conversations you have had with your child?

What can you do now to prepare your child for moving out into the world and away from the protection of home and family?

How will you ensure that you are open to hearing your child's views (now and in the future) and refrain from defensiveness? Can you commit to being open to hearing about your own shortcomings and missteps as a transracial parent?

What can you do now and in the future to ensure that your adult child will want you to stand with them in fighting racism and discrimination?

How do you feel about and how will you respond if your adult child chooses to live in and identify with a culture and community that is different from yours?

What can you do to create an environment that your adult child, as well as their partners, friends, and possible children, feels welcome, wanted, and safe in?

## **Scenarios**

Share with the group the following scenarios and talk through how they might respond. If members want, you can also do these as role-plays in the support group, allowing all members to increase their comfort with hard conversations and responses to racism.

### **Scenario 1**

You are engaging in a conversation about racism in America with a friend or colleague. The person you are talking to questions your views and says that you are racist for bringing up race like this.

### **Ask**

How have you managed (or how would you manage) situations like this?

How might your feelings and emotions affect your ability to engage in these difficult conversations?

What would you do when someone tries to shame you during conversations about race?

Do you censor yourself because you are afraid to have tough conversations? How can you get past that?

### **Do**

Facilitate a discussion with the group, eliciting ideas and recording them on a flip chart.

## Say

Here are some suggestions if you want to get better at these responses:

- Practice these conversations with your partner or a trusted friend so you can feel more comfortable.
- Create a script or key talking points for yourself so you know what it is you want to say.
- Ask friends and colleagues for strategies and responses they have used that have worked well.
- Here are some ways to help you respond effectively:<sup>5</sup>
  - **Use “I” statements.** People can only speak to their own experiences.
  - **Avoid “right” and “wrong.”** Even if you wholeheartedly believe that someone is wrong, it’s not productive to tell someone they’re wrong. Keep using “I” statements instead.
  - **Choose your words carefully.** Think about what you’re saying, not just in terms of message, but also in terms of impact on the other person. If someone says something you think is offensive, consider that they may not realize they said something hurtful. If someone calls you out for saying something offensive, remember that your intent can be different than your impact.
  - **Pause before responding.** Give yourself time to process your reaction to something before jumping in with a response. Taking a few deep breaths can help you focus. Also, responding may need to happen later, at a time after you’ve given yourself time to cool down and gather your thoughts.
  - **Know that you’re not necessarily the expert.** You might make mistakes when speaking about racial justice. If you hear something that has offended you, say “ouch” to convey its impact. Explain why a comment has offended you. Then the person who said the comment has the opportunity to say “oops,” sharing that they made a mistake. It opens the door to acknowledging and learning from that mistake, then continuing the conversation.
  - **Be kind when you share facts.** Everyone’s personal experience matters. Share information to enhance the discussion, not to shut it down.

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<sup>5</sup> From Edward-Elmhurst Health, “Q&A on racism and diversity: How to respond when someone says...,” Healthy Driven, June 2, 2021, <https://www.ehealth.org/blog/2021/06/racism-diversity-questions-answers/>.

## Scenario 2

Your child comes home from fifth grade very upset. During class it seems that several times they were ignored when they had their hand up with the answer, so much so that their classmate said something to them. After you ask your child some more questions, you find out that many children of color in the class feel overlooked.

### Ask

How do you comfort your child right now?

How do you manage your emotions about what has happened?

How do you engage the professionals responsible for the classroom and the school?

Have you talked with your child about what they want to see happen? How can you ensure that you are honoring your child's wishes while also advocating for their needs?

### Do

Facilitate a discussion with the group, eliciting ideas and recording them on a flip chart.

### Prompts:

- *Request a meeting with the teacher, guidance counselor, or school psychologist, along with an administrator, to discuss your child's experience. Come prepared to take notes and consider bringing a trusted friend or partner for moral support and an extra set of eyes and ears. If this does not result in a satisfying resolution, bring the matter to the superintendent's attention.*
- *Seek the counsel and advice of your BIPOC network.*

## Scenario 3

It's Thanksgiving at your house. One of the family elders shares their view on race in America using racist terms and language, and several other family members agree. Your transracially adopted child, teen, or adult is present and remains quiet.

### Ask

How do you respond in this moment?

How do you respond later?

## Do

Facilitate a discussion with the group, eliciting ideas and recording them on the flip chart.

### **Prompts:**

- *It's critical that parents speak up in the moment, making their anti-racist stance clear and unwavering.*
- *A statement like, "That is not language/beliefs/values that our family endorses and it is offensive to me" is an appropriate response.*
- *Leaving the situation as a family is a strong action statement.*
- *It is a good preemptive plan to set an expectation from the start that racism is not tolerated in your and your child's presence.*
- *Children need to know that they are the most important people to their parents. Transracially adoptive parents must be willing to separate themselves from toxic family members or friends.*
- *Parents should follow up with their child, checking in to see how they are, how they think the parent handled the situation, and how they would like to handle similar situations in the future.*

## Next steps: A lived experience panel

### **Facilitator's note:**

*There is nothing more powerful than hearing people share about their own experiences. Especially for difficult topics, the use of a panel can encourage even the most reluctant listener to reexamine their beliefs. For a panel to be both safe for the presenters and useful for the audience, there are some fundamentals to keep in mind:*

- *Ensure that you have funds to pay panelists for their time and expertise. This is a heavy lift for panelists and they deserve to be paid.*
- *Identify a moderator who has experience guiding panel presentations and managing audience questions.*
- *Prepare all presenters in advance, ensuring that they are comfortable and confident in their presentation.*

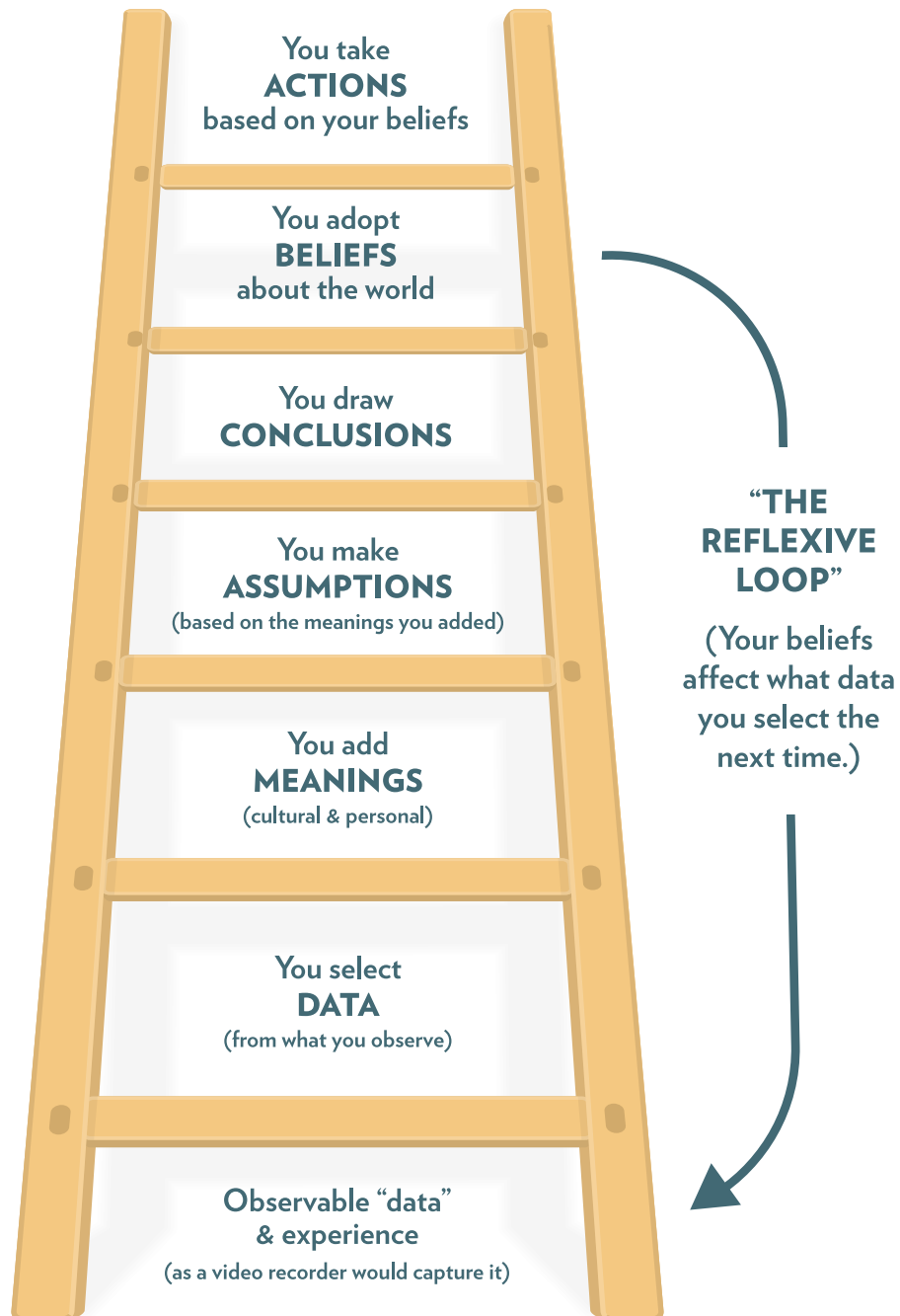


- *Include young adults or mature teens who have been parented transracially, parents who are parenting transracially, and at least one person who can reflect back on their experiences in transracial placements in the past. It's often best to not have a parent and youth from the same family so the discussion doesn't get too personal or become a back-and-forth about what they did or didn't do.*
- *Due to the nature and subject matter of this panel, be sure this is not the first time your panelists have discussed these topics in front of an audience. And remember, even more mature youth may need guidance and support as they share their experiences.*
- *If possible, identify and include a therapist or other helping professional with experience in supporting adolescents in developing a positive racial identity.*
- *Structure the presentation with a positive, solutions-based approach. For presenters who did not have a good experience, help them shape their comments around, "What would have been helpful or improved the situation?"*
- *Prepare the audience for a Q & A period that is respectful and nonjudgmental; confirm to all that panelists that they can decline to answer anything that makes them uncomfortable.*
- *Provide time and space for a debrief—both for panelists and audience. Be ready to support the young people if needed.*

**HANDOUT 1**

# Ladder of Inference

Share this handout with participants at the beginning of the discussion of Part 1, Topic 4:  
Impact of Assumptions and Implicit Bias.



## HANDOUT 2

# Scenarios

Use the following scenarios during **Part 1, Topic 5: The Impact of Language**.

## *Scenario 1*

Your manager asks you to do a big presentation for some important clients. She says that she'd rather you do it instead of your coworker because your coworker's accent makes her difficult to understand and she can sometimes be too "aggressive" in her style.

## *Scenario 2*

Your child, who is Black, is playing at the park with a friend and you are visiting with the friend's mother. You mention a recent visit with your child's birth family and how fun it was for your child. The other parent says that they didn't realize you have contact with your child's birth family and asks if that's safe. The other parent goes on to say that they understand there is "a lot of violence in that neighborhood/community/country." You are unsure if your child heard what was said.

Use the following scenarios during **Part 3, Topic 6: Parental roles and responsibilities across the lifespan**.

## *Scenario 1*

You are engaging in a conversation about racism in America with a friend or colleague and the person you are talking with questions your views and says that you are racist for bringing up race like this.

## *Scenario 2*

Your child comes home from fifth grade very upset. During class it seems that several times they were ignored when they had their hand up with the answer, so much so that their classmate said something to them. After you ask your child some more questions, you find out that many children of color in the class feel overlooked.

## *Scenario 3*

It's Thanksgiving at your house. One of the family elders shares their view on race in America using racist terms and language, and several other family members agree. Your transracially adopted child, teen, or adult is present and remains quiet.

## HANDOUT 3

# Transracial parenting resources

This resource list is for adoptive, foster, and kinship caregivers who are caring for children of another race or culture. The majority are specifically to aid white parents in supporting their children's safety, well-being, cultural connections, and development of a strong, positive racial and cultural identity. It includes resources to help parents and caregivers learn to talk with children about race, racism, racialized violence, police brutality, and more. There is also a list of books for children and young adults.

## Transracial parenting books and online resources

Adoptive and Foster Family Coalition of New York

<https://affcnny.org/family-supports/transracial-transcultural/>

*Black Anthology: Adult Adoptees Claim Their Space*, by Susan Harris O'Connor and Diane Rene Christian

*Black Baby, White Hands*, by Jaiya John

*Growing Up Black in White*, by Kevin Hofmann

*I'm Chocolate, You're Vanilla*, by Marguerite A. White

*Inside Transracial Adoption*, by Beth Hall & Gail Steinberg

*In Their Voices: Black Americans on Transracial Adoption*, by Rhonda Roorda

*In Their Own Voices: Transracial Adoptees Tell Their Stories*, by Rita James Simon & Rhonda Roorda

North American Council on Adoptable Children

<https://www.nacac.org/help/parenting/transracial-parenting/>

*Outsiders Within*, by Trenka, Oparah & Shin

*The Harris Narratives*, by Susan Harris O'Connor

## Social media/blogs from transracial adoptees

Born in June, Raised in April: <https://juneinapril.libsyn.com>

Harlow's Monkey: <https://harlows-monkey.com>

The Adopted Life: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/gNH71bnLjxA>

Transracial Adoption Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/TransracialAdoption/about>

## Talking about race

“10 Tips for Teaching and Talking to Kids About Race”

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/teaching-and-talking-to-kids>

“16 Ways to Help Children Become Thoughtful, Informed and BRAVE About Race”

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/16-ways-to-help-children-become-thoughtful-informed-and-brave-about-race>

“Children Are Not Colorblind: How Young Children Learn Race”

<https://inclusions.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Children-are-Not-Colorblind.pdf>

“How to Talk to Kids About Race”

[https://youtu.be/QNEKbVq\\_ou4](https://youtu.be/QNEKbVq_ou4)

“Resources to Support Children’s Well-Being Amid Anti-Black Racism, Racial Violence and Trauma”

<https://www.childtrends.org/publications/resources-to-support-childrens-emotional-well-being-amid-anti-black-racism-racial-violence-and-trauma>

“Talking About Race”

<https://nmaahc.si.edu/learn/talking-about-race>

“Talking to Young Children About Race and Racism”

<https://www.pbs.org/parents/talking-about-racism>

“Transracial Parenting in Foster Care and Adoption”

[http://www.ifapa.org/pdf\\_docs/TransracialParenting.pdf](http://www.ifapa.org/pdf_docs/TransracialParenting.pdf)

## Talking about racism, racialized violence, and police brutality

“Black Parents Explain How to Deal with the Police”

<https://youtu.be/coryt8IZ-DE>

“Get Home Safely: 10 Rules of Survival”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqJ-psD9vJw&t=3s>

“How I Teach Kids About Racism” (Kindergarten and 1st grade)

<https://youtu.be/jbnkwbbHXFo>

“How Parents Can Help Kids Understand the Protests and Fight Racism”

<https://youtu.be/uCXEz9M6Gic>

“How to Talk to Your Kids About Race, Racism and Police Violence”

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/on-point-radio-how-to-talk-to-your-kids-about-race-racism-and-police-violence>

“Stop the Violence Safety Video: What to Do When You Get Pulled over by Police”

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=10154201872210993>

“Supporting Kids of Color Amidst Racialized Violence”

<https://www.embracerace.org/resources/i-still-cant-breathe-supporting-kids-of-color-amid-racialized-violence>

“Talking to Kids After Racial Incidents”

<https://www.gse.upenn.edu/news/talking-children-after-racial-incidents>

“Talking with Children About Racism, Police Brutality and Protests”

<https://www.ahaparenting.com/blog/talking-with-children-about-racism-police-brutality-and-protests>

“What to Do If You Are Stopped by the Police”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F2T67-SEvLg>

## Resources for kids about race and racism

### Ages 4 – 8

*A Kids Book About Racism*, by Jelani Memory

Also available on <https://youtu.be/LnaltG5N8nE>



*Anti-racist Baby*, by Ibram X. Kendi

*Let's Talk About Race*, by Julius Lester

Also available on <https://youtu.be/1vHymutysWU>

*Momma Did You Hear the News?*, by Sonya Wittacker Gragg

*The Day You Begin*, by Jacqueline Woodson

### **Ages 8 – 12**

*A Good Kind of Trouble*, by Lisa Moore Ramee

*For Black Girls Like Me*, by Mariama Lockington

*Genesis Begins Again*, by Alicia D. Williams

*New Kid*, by Jerry Craft

*One Crazy Summer*, by Rita Williams-Garcia

*The Stars Beneath Our Feet*, by David Barclay Moore

### **Teens and young adults**

*All American Boys*, by Jason Reynolds & Brendan Kiely

*Dear Martin*, by Nic Stone

*Ghost Boys*, by Jewell Parker Rhodes

*Piecing Me Together*, by Renee Watson

*See No Color*, by Shannon Gibney

*The Hate U Give*, by Angie Thomas

*This Book is Anti-racist*, by Tiffany Jewell

*When the Black Girl Sings*, by Bill Wright

Adoptees On Podcast

<https://player.fm/series/adoptees-on>

Code Switch

<https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510312/codeswitch>

Self-Evident: Asian America's Stories

<https://player.fm/series/self-evident-asian-americas-stories>

Stuff You Missed in History Class

<https://www.iheart.com/podcast/stuff-you-missed-in-history-cl-21124503/>

The 1619 Project

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/08/14/magazine/1619-america-slavery.html>

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