

AMVZE works

stereotypes
action culture
listening collaboration
understanding
empathy
bias belonging prejudice
respect identity
differences

Resources for Caregivers Navigating Conversations with Children on Race, Racism, and Discrimination For ages 11 and up

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Dear Caregivers,

This collection of lessons on Race, Racism, and Discrimination serves as a resource to help guide conversations with adolescents. Our young people are frequently impacted by these things, whether implicitly or explicitly. At AMAZEworks, we believe that building a healthy identity, learning to show respect across differences, and naming and taking action against instances of injustice all begin from honest, intentional conversations. We thank you for engaging in this difficult, yet invaluable work.

We also know the power of sharing stories. When we listen to each other's stories, we build empathy. This empathy is necessary if we want to shift our thinking from "their issue" to "our issue." When we take time to understand racism and discrimination in all its forms, we are better equipped to stand up to it.

This work requires time and dedication. These books and lessons are a starting point. If you have additional questions or want more resources, we encourage you to visit our website:
www.amazeworks.org.

In solidarity with all who strive for justice,
AMAZEworks

Adolescent Video Lesson for Caregivers

How You See Me: Why Do Labels Matter?

Video Title and Link

“How You See Me: Why Do Labels Matter?” *YouTube*, Uploaded by Soul Pancake, 13 February 2017, https://youtu.be/P_GkSHBVHzc.

Recommended Ages

11 and up

Video Summary to Share With Adolescents

In this video, the participants discuss labels and social identities. The participants discuss why labels matter and how they can be used to start and continue conversations with others about identity.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- How have you been labeled by others in the past? Do you have positive or negative associations with these labels? Where do these associations come from?
- What other labels has society put on people? How might these labels affect others?
- How might these labels affect your expectations for and interactions with others?

Caregiver’s Note

This video provides an opportunity to talk with adolescent children about the labels placed on people’s personal and social identities. Personal identity refers to an individual’s personal characteristics, personality traits, and experiences without regard to a larger group. Social Identity refers to how an individual defines themselves based on their membership in a particular group. The groups are often based on the socially constructed categories of race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, age, gender, sexual orientation, etc. A stereotype is an oversimplified generalization about a group of people based on a particular characteristic or attribute of the group. It is a belief that individuals belonging to a particular group will think, say, or act the same way. Though stereotypes can be both positive and negative, all stereotypes can have harmful effects on the individuals who are being stereotyped. ([“The Negative In Positive Stereotypes”](#))

Discussing labels and identity is something that ALL families must do and something that many families of color must do in order to protect their children from racial bias and injustice. White families need to have these conversations, too. To stay silent teaches children that racism doesn’t exist and that they, therefore, have no part to play in perpetuating racial oppression and injustice or eradicating it.

Connection to Social-Emotional Learning and Anti-Bias Education

SEL

Self-Awareness

Self-Management

Social Awareness

Relationship Skills

Responsible Decision-Making

ABE

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Healthy Complex Identities

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Notice, Name, and Reject Bias

Responsiveness and Action

Discussion Questions

1. What is the connection between labels and identity?
2. What is the connection between labels and stereotypes?
3. What are some positive things about holding on to labels?
4. What are some negative things about labels and labeling others?
5. How are labels given to us by others/society? How can we choose labels for ourselves?
6. What is the difference between labels and boxes? Are both necessary? Positive? Negative?

Journal Questions/Activities

- Why do labels matter?
- What labels do you want to hold on to? Why? What labels do you want to let go of? Why?
- Work with your child to create a collage of the empowering labels they want to hold on to and the negative labels they would like others to stop using for them.

Adolescent Video Lesson for Caregivers

The Struggle of Being Mixed Race

Video Title and Link

“The Struggle of Being Mixed Race” *YouTube*, Uploaded by As/Is, 12 January 2016,
<https://youtu.be/ob-qmfvnQVo>.

Recommended Ages

12 and up

Video Summary to Share With Adolescents

In this video, the participants talk about their identities and some of their experiences as being biracial and multiracial.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Have you ever felt like you had to “prove” an aspect of your identity? Describe that time and how you dealt with that situation.
- Think back to when you first noticed people as “others” (a group of people who were very different from what you were used to). How did you feel about yourself in relation to “others”? When did you feel like an “other”?

Caregiver’s Note

Multiracial Americans make up a growing percentage of people in the U.S. While they share some things in common, they cannot be easily categorized, and their lived experiences differ significantly. This video highlights some of the negative microaggressions multiracial Americans encounter. It is important to discuss with your child that being multiracial is complex and that the majority of multiracial Americans are proud of their backgrounds.

Microaggressions are “the everyday slights, indignities, put-downs, and insults that people of color, women, LGBT populations, or those who are marginalized, experience in their day to day interactions with people. Microaggressions often times appear to be a compliment but contain a metacommunication or a hidden insult to the target groups in which it is delivered. People who engage in microaggressions are ordinary folks who experience themselves as good, moral, decent individuals. Microaggressions occur because they are outside the level of conscious awareness of the perpetrator.” (Derald Wing Sue, [What Is a Microaggression?](#))

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Discussion Questions

1. What does the term “ethnically ambiguous” mean?
2. “Identity is not just the sum of the races in one’s family tree. It’s more complicated than that.” What does this quote mean? How is it more complicated?
3. In the video, one person talks about feeling rejected from both sides of their ethnic identity. Why do you think they experienced this rejection?
4. Why do other people feel the need to point out others’ differences? What is the impact of that on someone who is bi- or multiracial? How does this relate to privilege and microaggressions?
5. In the video, one person says that “depending on where I am, people read me differently”. How do people read you differently depending on where you are and who you are with?
6. How can we better support ALL people in their complex ethnic and racial identities?

Journal Questions/Activities

- How can you personally relate to the struggle that the video participants discussed about not feeling like they can belong 100%?
- Have you ever felt like you had to “prove” an aspect of your identity? Describe that time and how you dealt with that situation.

Adolescent Video Lesson for Caregivers

Intersectionality 101

Video Title and Link

“Intersectionality 101” *YouTube*, Uploaded by Teaching Tolerance, 18 May 2016,
<https://youtu.be/w6dnj2lyYjE>.

Recommended Ages

11 and up

Video Summary to Share With Adolescents

This animated video, created by Teaching Tolerance, gives a basic description of intersectionality and why it's important to understand. It also gives a couple of examples.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- What role has intersectionality played in your life?
- Think about the identities of your child(ren)'s friends. How is intersectionality impacting their lives?
- How can you use intersectionality to talk about privilege with your child(ren)?

Caregiver's Note

When talking about race with your child, be sure to include intersectionality in your conversations. Intersectionality is the social, economic and political ways in which identity-based systems of oppression and privilege connect, overlap and influence one another. Kimberlé Crenshaw first used the term intersectionality in 1989 in her essay, [“Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics”](#) to describe how the experiences of black women were different than the experiences of white women or black men. Crenshaw describes in a later essay, [“Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color.”](#) how it is important to recognize the different experiences different identities within a group have and how failure to do so causes tension among groups.

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Discussion Questions

- How would you describe intersectionality to someone?
- How does intersectionality give us a way to talk about oppressions and privileges that overlap and reinforce each other?
- When it comes to intersectionality, how are Fatima or Greg's experiences different from Greta's?

- The video says, “Life isn’t the same for everyone - even for people who share identity characteristics.” What does this mean?
- Why is it important to understand intersectionality and how it is experienced differently?
- What are some identities that may experience intersections of privilege?
- What are some other marginalized identities that may experience intersections of injustice not mentioned in the video?

Journal Questions/Activities

- Think about the various parts of your social identity. Which parts intersect to give you privilege and which ones do not?
- Think about someone else you know well that shares at least one of your identities. How might they experience intersectionality differently than you?

Adolescent Video Lesson for Caregivers

Why Colorblindness Will NOT End Racism

Video Title and Link

“Why Colorblindness Will NOT End Racism.” *YouTube*, Uploaded by MTV Decoded, 8 June 2016, https://youtu.be/H4LpT9TF_ew.

Recommended Ages

12 and up

Video Summary to Share With Adolescents

In this video, Franchesca Ramsey, from MTV Decoded, talks about how while race is a social rather than biological construct, that not seeing race (or Colorblind ideology) does harm and does not do anything to stop racism.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- Think back to a time when you first became aware of the differences in skin color. What messages did you receive from the adults in your life about these differences?
- When did you first become aware of how race as a social construct impacts people’s lives and experiences?
- What role has race had in your story/life?

Caregiver’s Note

Race is an American-centered social construct designed to categorize people and assign or deny power and privilege to groups of people based on the color of their skin. Scientists have found no genetic basis for race, and there is generally more genetic variation within one “racial group” than between “races”. However, racism is real and impacts the lived experience of people of color and indigenous people in America.

Colorblind Racism is a “contemporary racial ideology that holds the belief that people, institutions and policy makers should try to ignore race in order to claim a desire to treat all persons equally but having the effect of justifying contemporary racial oppression. Color-blindness uses a set of ideas, phrases, and stories to discount racial oppression. Furthermore, color-blindness plays on the myth that the social realities of race and racism have all but disappeared as a factor shaping the life chances of all Americans.” (from Minnesota Educational Equity Partnership, mneep.org)

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Discussion Questions

1. What is a social construct? How is race a social construct?
2. How has the social construct of race had an impact on people's lives?
3. What other social constructs exist?
4. What does it mean to be colorblind when talking about race?
5. Why is it harmful to be colorblind and not recognize race?
6. In the video, Franchesca Ramsey says, "Ignoring race or only acknowledging that it doesn't exist biologically is not a solution to these systemic issues." What does it take to undo racism?
7. What can you do when you encounter someone with colorblind ideology?

Journal Questions/Activities

- How are skin color and race a part of your story?
- What other social constructs have an impact on our lives?
- What can you do to acknowledge racism exists?

Adolescent Video Lesson for Caregivers

A Conversation About Growing Up Black

Video Title and Link

“A Conversation About Growing Up Black.” *YouTube*, Uploaded by The New York Times, 8 May 2015, <https://youtu.be/rSAw51caEeg>.

Important Note

This lesson is intended for **families whose children do not identify as Black/African American** in order to give insight into the lived experiences of Black youth, so they can develop more empathy and understanding. Black/African American children who can possibly relate to what is said on the video may have strong emotional reactions to this video, so we encourage caregivers to preview the video and lesson before sharing it with their Black children.

Recommended Ages

11 and up

Video Summary to Share With Adolescents

In this New York Times OpEd short documentary, Black/African American boys talk about their experiences with growing up black in America.

Reflection Questions for the Caregiver

- What are your initial reactions to the Black Lives Matter movement? To what extent are your reactions based on direct, lived experience versus an understood or assumed experience?
- To do feel prepared to explain to your children why the All Lives Matter response fails to understand the purpose of the Black Lives Matter movement? If not, what supports do you need and where can you find them?
- Are you identifying how institutional “isms” advantage or disadvantage you and others? Are you reflecting on the biases, stereotypes, and prejudices you may hold about yourself and others?

Caregiver’s Note

This video provides an opportunity to talk frankly with adolescent children about police violence against Black/African Americans. Discussing race in America and the impact of racism on communities of color is something that ALL families must do and something that many families of color must do in order to protect their children from racial bias and injustice. White families need to have these conversations, too. To stay silent teaches children that racism doesn’t exist and that they, therefore, have no part to play in perpetuating racial oppression and injustice or eradicating it.

Be aware of how your children may react to this video. White children may feel defensive or guilty. Those with family members who are police officers may also react defensively, even though there is no disparagement against police in the video.

In the video, one boy refers to the “magic word” in the novel *Huckleberry Finn*. You may want to pause the video at this point to explain to students that he is referring to the N-word, which shows up many times in that book. Also, here is a video of Ta-Nehisi Coates talking about the use of the N-word for your own background information: <https://youtu.be/QO15S3WC9pg>.

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Discussion Questions

1. What is your reaction to this video? What thoughts, emotions, reactions do you have?
2. Several boys in the video refer to the reactions that white women have to seeing them on the street (clutching their bags, crossing the street, etc.). Why do you think these women had these reactions?
3. Where do these biases against and stereotypes of Black/African American boys/young men come from?
4. What interactions and experiences have these youth had with police? How have these interactions and experiences shaped their attitudes towards police?
5. One boy says, "The way people perceive me is not up to me." What does he mean by this? Why do you think he says this? Do you agree with him?
6. Why does one young man say that "black people don't get as many chances as they do...you can't mess up"? Who is the "they" he refers to? Why do you think he says this?
7. What does it say about race relations and racism in our country when a 10-year-old Black/African American boy feels he has to publicly declare that he is "perfectly fine" and that he's "not going to hurt anyone"?

Journal Questions/Activities

- Write about a time when the way someone else perceived you was different than how you perceived yourself. What happened in that situation? What were your thoughts, feelings, and/or reactions?
- How might your perspective of this video change depending on what race you are? (How might you hear the messages in this video differently if you are Black/African American, white, Asian American, Latino, Native American, or bi/multiracial?)