

Inclusive language guide



My Whole Self



MHFA England



My Whole Self



MHFA England

Contents

Introduction

This guide aims to empower you to have supportive, inclusive conversations about race.

It is designed to give you:

-  Confidence to have conversations about race and racism at work and outside work
-  An understanding of what the language means – its history, context, and how to apply it
-  Helpful resources and places to go to continue learning about anti-racism

We hope it will encourage you to think about language to use when talking or writing about race. Please use it as a platform to build on – it is not exhaustive, and you will find links to sources for further learning.



Before you start a conversation

Share your gender pronouns

Sharing your pronouns as part of introducing yourself to others will empower others to share their own confidently.



What is a gender pronoun?

They are the words that refer to people's gender in conversation, such as she/her, he/him. Some people use gender neutral pronouns such as they/their or ze/zir.



Why share your pronouns?

Assuming someone's pronouns based on their appearance can reinforce harmful stereotypes about gender expression. By making it commonplace to share our own, we can encourage others not to assume people's pronouns. This helps to reinforce respect for each person's gender identity as part of creating an inclusive space.



Example

As part of an introduction you could say: "My name is Jo, I am a Customer Services Assistant, and my pronouns are she/her".

Check in with people

Pay attention to what's happening around you, and be aware of the impact on the person in front of you.

Lead from a place of compassionate curiosity and empathy

This guide is not designed to give you answers that form assumptions. Instead, we hope it will encourage you to listen, notice your unconscious biases, and proactively learn more.

Terms and definitions



Allyship (noun)



What does it mean?

Allyship is using privilege to actively support the rights of a marginalised group. It is a lifelong commitment to listening, unlearning, self-educating, and re-evaluating.

Being an anti-racist ally means:

- Using privilege to bring about change
- Learning and teaching White people the barriers to success and exploring how to dismantle them
- Listening to and amplifying the voices of Black people/People of Colour
- Confronting racial injustices even when it's uncomfortable
- Understanding the power of language and actions to include or exclude and the potential to cause pain
- Using your power to influence change and amplify anti-racism in your workplace or community



Example

"Poor allyship is taking credit for the experiences of marginalised people and taking recognition for the arguments they have been having for their entire lives."



Learn more

guidetoallyship.com

theantioppressionnetwork.com/allyship



B

BAME (abbreviation, adjective)

? What does it mean?

Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic.

This term encompasses all ethnic groups other than Caucasian. We encourage our MHFA England community to avoid this term as we would like to move to addressing people more specifically. We have chosen not to use the term BAME because it does not recognise and celebrate the diversity of identities and experiences.

Many People of Colour, White, government and not-for-profit organisations still use BAME. You do not need to challenge this language as the term isn't an offensive or derogatory word, although it may cause offence to some people.

➤ Learn more

- [bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-53205008](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-53205008)
- [gal-dem.com/bookmark-this-are-acronyms-like-bame-a-nonsense](https://www.gal-dem.com/bookmark-this-are-acronyms-like-bame-a-nonsense)
- [glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/bame-no-longer-fit-for-purpose](https://www.glamourmagazine.co.uk/article/bame-no-longer-fit-for-purpose)

Bigotry (noun)

? What does it mean?

An attachment to a belief or opinion that is not based in rationality, which manifests as prejudice against a person or a group of people.

👏 Example

“Bigotry prevented her from considering the counterarguments.”

➤ Learn more

- [futurity.org/bigotry-bigot-history-2378402](https://www.futurity.org/bigotry-bigot-history-2378402)
- [theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/12/bigotry-and-the-english-language/281935](https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2013/12/bigotry-and-the-english-language/281935)

BIPOC (abbreviation, noun)

? What does it mean?

Black, Indigenous and/or People of Colour.

BIPOC is an alternative term for ‘non-White’ and is inclusive of Indigenous people. While it has been more commonly used in America, it is starting to become integrated into the language we use in the UK.

If you’re discussing issues that impact groups of Black people, Indigenous people, and other People of Colour, and it isn’t possible to be more specific, you might use ‘BIPOC’.

👏 Example

“BIPOC can experience racism on a daily basis but BIPOC did not start the Black Lives Matter movement.”

➤ Learn more

- [nytimes.com/article/what-is-bipoc.html](https://www.nytimes.com/article/what-is-bipoc.html)
- [vox.com/2020/6/30/21300294/bipoc-what-does-it-mean-critical-race-linguistics-jonathan-rosa-deandra-miles-hercules](https://www.vox.com/2020/6/30/21300294/bipoc-what-does-it-mean-critical-race-linguistics-jonathan-rosa-deandra-miles-hercules)

Black people (noun)

? What does it mean?

People of African descent or of the African diaspora.

If you’re referring to Black people, use the term ‘Black people’ and not ‘People of Colour’. White supremacy is rooted in and upheld by anti-Blackness, so it is important to distinguish Black people and their experience from other groups.

➤ Learn more

- [lingthusiasm.com/post/166585412086/lingthusiasm-episode-13-what-does-it-mean-to?mc_cid=9019d2843a&mc_eid=207976c307](https://www.lingthusiasm.com/post/166585412086/lingthusiasm-episode-13-what-does-it-mean-to?mc_cid=9019d2843a&mc_eid=207976c307)
- [nytimes.com/2020/07/05/insider/capitalized-black.html](https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/05/insider/capitalized-black.html)



D

Discrimination (noun)

? What does it mean?

Prejudiced or inequitable treatment of people based on groups they belong to, particularly on matters of race, gender, ability, or age.

👏 Example

“Discrimination on the grounds of age will become unlawful from October 2006.”

➔ Learn more

[amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination](https://www.amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/discrimination)

[equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/race-discrimination](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/race-discrimination)

[gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights](https://www.gov.uk/discrimination-your-rights)

Diversity (noun)

? What does it mean?

Respecting and appreciating the dimensions that make people unique. Examples include culture, race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, socioeconomic status, ability, age, and religion. People’s differences allow them to bring valuable perspectives and experiences.

👏 Example

“Does television adequately reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of the country?”

➔ Learn more

[investorsinpeople.com/knowledge/workplace-diversity](https://www.investorsinpeople.com/knowledge/workplace-diversity)

Dual heritage (adjective)

? What does it mean?

Having parents of different nationalities or ethnicities. Some people will prefer the term Mixed Race or Biracial.

👏 Example

“The sociocultural difficulties that dual heritage people face are rarely talked about in the mainstream.”

➔ Learn more

[desiblitz.com/content/the-challenges-of-growing-up-with-dual-heritage-in-britain](https://www.desiblitz.com/content/the-challenges-of-growing-up-with-dual-heritage-in-britain)

E

Equity vs. equality (noun)

? What do they mean?

Equality = same

Equality assumes that everyone will benefit from the same support. That isn’t the case as we are all different with different needs.

Equality aims to promote fairness and justice, but it can only work if everyone starts from the same place and needs the same things.

Equity = fairness

Equity is about making sure people get access to the same opportunity. Sometimes our differences and history can create barriers to participation.

Equity acknowledges that not everyone has the same start in life and puts measures in place to ensure fairness in outcomes for all people.

We must first ensure equity before we can enjoy equality.



My Whole Self



Learn more

forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2019/08/15/the-difference-between-workplace-equity-and-equality-and-why-it-matters

muslimgirl.com/heres-care-equity-equality

youtu.be/nCS7Rus4_-Y



Inclusion (noun)



What does it mean?

A universal human right which gives equity of access to opportunities and resources.

Inclusion is more than representation of diversity. To be inclusive we must create an environment of belonging and authenticity, where everyone’s participation is valued and respected.



Example

“An inclusive working environment is one in which everyone feels that they belong without having to conform, that their contribution matters and they are able to perform to their full potential, no matter their background, identity or circumstances.”



Learn more

cipd.co.uk/knowledge/fundamentals/relations/diversity/factsheet



MHFA England

Indigenous people (noun)



What does it mean?

Those naturally existing in a place or country rather than arriving from another place.

There is no universally accepted definition for ‘Indigenous’, though there are characteristics that tend to be common among Indigenous peoples:

- Indigenous people are distinct populations relative to the dominant post-colonial culture of their country. They are often minority populations within the current post-colonial nations states
- Indigenous people usually have (or had) their own language, cultures, and traditions influenced by living relationships with their ancestral homelands
- Indigenous people have distinctive cultural traditions that are still practiced
- Indigenous people have (or had) their own land and territory, to which they are tied in myriad ways
- Indigenous people self-identify as Indigenous

(From culturalsurvival.org/issues)



Example

“Most Indigenous peoples have retained distinct characteristics which are clearly different from those of other segments of the national populations.”



Learn more

amnesty.org/en/what-we-do/indigenous-peoples-dual-heritage-in-britain

theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/dec/20/indigenous-britons-far-right

un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/about-us.html

un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/5session_factsheet1.pdf



Internalised racism (noun)

? What does it mean?

The private racial beliefs people hold. These can reflect the way we absorb messages about race, which inform our biases and prejudices.

For Black people and People of Colour, this may mean conscious or unconscious negative beliefs about themselves or their group as a result of internalised oppression.

For White people, it may mean holding negative beliefs about BIPOC based on internalised privilege, which can manifest as a sense of superiority and entitlement.

👉 Example

“Internalised racism can have an adverse effect on those who experience it.”

➔ Learn more

youtu.be/RBrW129hKmg

Institutional racism or systematic racism (noun)

? What does it mean?

Where racial inequality is woven into the fabric of systems of power and seen as the norm. These systems often include workplaces, governments, and services.

It can result discriminatory and inequitable policies, practices, treatment, and outcomes.

👉 Example

“A school system that concentrates People of Colour in the most overcrowded and under-resourced schools is an example of institutional racism.”

➔ Learn more

eprints.lse.ac.uk

metro.co.uk/2020/03/05/institutional-racism-harmful-12176557

theguardian.com/uk-news/2019/feb/22/macpherson-report-what-was-it-and-what-impact-did-it-have

Interpersonal racism (noun)

? What does it mean?

The ways in which people's internal prejudices or unconscious biases show themselves when interacting with others. These beliefs can be acted upon verbally or nonverbally, visibly or invisibly.

When interpersonal racism is visible it can take the form of bigotry, hate speech, or racial violence.

👉 Example

“The person on the bus began throwing rubbish and making xenophobic remarks to passengers. The conductor removed them, as any form of interpersonal racism is completely unacceptable.”

➔ Learn more

onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1111/1467-9566.13001

Intersectionality (noun)

? What does it mean?

Overlapping social categories such as race, ability, religion, sexuality, gender, and class, can mean that a person experiences multiple layers of discrimination and disadvantage.

Black legal scholar **Kimberlé Crenshaw** coined the term to describe the experiences of Black women, who experience both sexism and racism.

👉 Example

“Understanding intersectionality is vital to achieve equity and to break the systems and structures that enable oppression.”

➔ Learn more

ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality?language=en

vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination



M

Microaggression (noun)

? What does it mean?

The small, casual, and often unconscious insults experienced by marginalised groups. Microaggressions can go unnoticed to those unaware of their impact.

👏 Example

“Microaggressions are the everyday verbal slights, digs, snubs and insults, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative prejudicial messages toward any group – particularly culturally marginalised groups. These statements repeat or affirm stereotypes about minority marginalised groups in a negative way.”

? How can I respond to microaggressions as an ally?

Using the technique developed by **Ganote, Cheung, and Souza** called **‘Opening the front door’**, you can take the first step in engaging in any type of micro-resistance at work and beyond:

- **Observe:** describe clearly and succinctly what you see happening
- **Think:** state what you think about it
- **Feel:** express your feelings about the situation
- **Desire:** assert what you would like to happen

? How can I respond to microaggressions as the person experiencing them?

Kevin L. Nadal describes a **three-step approach** to reacting to a microaggression by considering:

- Did this microaggression really occur?
- Should I respond to this microaggression?
- How should I respond to this microaggression?

➤ Learn more

advancingjustice-la.org/sites/default/files/ELAMICRO_A_Guide_to_Responding_to_Microaggressions.pdf

channel4.com/news/jamelia-interview

hbr.org/2020/07/when-and-how-to-respond-to-microaggressions

hbr.org/2020/07/youve-been-called-out-for-a-microaggression-what-do-you-do

psychologytoday.com/gb/blog/microaggressions-in-everyday-life/201010/racial-microaggressions-in-everyday-life

unomaha.edu/faculty-support/teaching-excellence/microaggressions-handout.pdf

youtu.be/hDd3bzA7450

Mixed Race, Biracial, Multiracial (adjective)

? What does it mean?

- **Mixed race:** having parents or ancestors from different ethnic backgrounds
- **Biracial:** being a member of two races and/or having parents from two races
- **Multiracial:** composed of, involving, or representing various races

👏 Examples

“My hair is so curly because I am Mixed Race – both my parents have a completely different hair type to me.”

“Ashley mentioned that his Biracial grandmother had always wanted to visit her father’s country before she passed.”

“Representation is important, so Kofi’s manager made sure to select pictures from a Multiracial image library.”

➤ Learn more

npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2016/08/25/455470334/all-mixed-up-what-do-we-call-people-of-multiple-backgrounds?t=1607959756308



My Whole Self



MHFA England



Performative allyship (noun)

? What does it mean?

When people engage in activism to increase their own social standing, rather than because they are committed to fighting inequity. It's often related to 'slacktivism', where activism is surface-level.

Example

"Posting a black square on Instagram, without also addressing racism when you see it, is simply performative allyship."



Learn more

goop.com/wellness/environmental-health-civics/how-to-move-beyond-performative-allyship/

People of Colour, Person of Colour, POC (noun)

? What does it mean?

A general term used for non-White people. It replaces the outdated term 'coloured' which needs to be addressed when heard.

? Why is the term 'coloured' inappropriate?

'Coloured' is a racial slur. It implies that one race is the norm and other races have been coloured in.

"The phrase 'coloured' brings to mind the social wrongs of segregation, subjugation and prejudice. We have seen them emblazoned on benches, water fountains and bus seats to mark out difference and to put people in their place." - Dr Katie Donington, Senior Lecturer in History at London South Bank University, quoted in [i news](#).



Example

"I spoke about the lack of People of Colour in our employee forums."



Learn more

bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-54888197

npr.org/2020/09/29/918418825/is-it-time-to-say-r-i-p-to-p-o-c

Prejudice (noun)



What does it mean?

The biased opinion of a person or group based on no evidence or rationality.



Example

"He had to battle against prejudice to get a job."



Learn more

equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/research-report-56-processes-of-prejudice-theory-evidence-and-intervention.pdf



QTPOC (abbreviation, noun)



What does it mean?

Queer and trans People of Colour.

This term is usually used when discussing issues that specifically, and often disproportionately, affect queer and trans communities of colour.



My Whole Self

Queer describes sexual and gender identities other than straight and cisgender. Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people may all identify with the word queer.

Only use this term for people who have self-identified as queer.

Trans is an umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth.

Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, such as transgender, cross dresser, non-binary, and gender queer.

(From **Stonewall**)

Example

“QTPOC individuals often face unique struggles in modern society.”

 **Learn more**
restforresistance.com/read

R

Racial justice (noun)

What does it mean?

Where the systems and structures are in place to enable all people to have equitable treatment and opportunities, regardless of race or ethnicity.

To build a framework for racial justice is to be proactive in seeking equity in society.

Example

“To achieve real racial justice, we need to have policies, beliefs, practices, attitudes and actions that promote equal opportunity and treatment for people of all races.”



MHFA England

 **Learn more**
eji.org/racial-justice

Racism (noun)

What does it mean?

Prejudice, discrimination, or hostility against a person or group based on their ethnicity or race. This can be led by an individual, a group, or institution. It is typically targeted towards minority groups or marginalised people.

Example

“It is important to ensure that the learning resources reflect experiences, reject racist stereotypes, and do not validate racism.”

 **Learn more**
gal-dem.com/racism-spreads-faster-than-most-epidemics

S

Structural racism or structural racialisation (noun)

What does it mean?

Racial bias across institutions and society which systematically privileges White people and disadvantages People of Colour.

As the word ‘racism’ is often understood as a conscious belief, ‘racialisation’ may be a better way to describe this process.

Race equity expert John A. Powell writes: “Racialisation’ connotes a process rather than a static event. It underscores the fluid and dynamic nature of race... ‘Structural racialisation’ is a set of processes that may generate disparities or depress life outcomes without any racist actors.”



My Whole Self

Example

“Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead, it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.”

Learn more

barnardos.org.uk/blog/how-systemic-racism-affects-young-people-uk
npr.org/2020/07/01/885878564/what-systemic-racism-means-and-the-way-it-harms-communities



Tokenism (noun)

What does it mean?

When a member of an underrepresented group is included in a workplace or group, without being given equal authority or opportunity. The member of the underrepresented group is often expected to represent and speak for a whole collective, placing a burden on them.

This can also be when a person is chosen specifically for their protected characteristic and not their strengths or abilities, such as a ‘token Black friend’ or ‘token Black person’ in company marketing materials.

Example

“Did the company choose her for her merits, or merely as an act of tokenism?”

Learn more

diversityforward.medium.com/tokenism-the-result-of-diversity-without-inclusion-460061db1eb6
vox.com/the-highlight/2019/5/20/18542843/intersectionality-conservatism-law-race-gender-discrimination



MHFA England



Unconscious bias or implicit bias (noun)

What does it mean?

Where social stereotypes about groups of people are formed outside of conscious awareness.

Everyone holds unconscious beliefs about various social and identity groups. These biases stem from people’s tendency to organise social worlds by categorising.

The vital thing is to become aware of what your biases are and challenge them through the language you use and your behaviour.

Example

“During the hiring process it is important to prevent errors in judgment that can arise from unconscious bias.”

Learn more

forbes.com/sites/pragyaagarwaleurope/2018/12/03/unconscious-bias-how-it-affects-us-more-than-we-know
theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/dec/02/unconscious-bias-what-is-it-and-can-it-be-eliminated
ukcoaching.org/resources/topics/diagram-infographic/understanding-unconscious-bias



W

White fragility (noun)

? What does it mean?

Where a White person experiences or demonstrates discomfort and defensiveness about racial inequality and their role in it.

👏 Example

“It was hard to discuss my feelings about the situation as my manager’s White fragility stopped them from acknowledging that it was about my race.”

➔ Learn more

harpersbazaar.com/uk/culture/a32812084/white-fragility-what-is-it
onbeing.org/programs/robin-diangelo-and-resmaa-menakem-in-conversation

White passing (adjective)

? What does it mean?

This term describes a person who is not ethnically White/Caucasian but have white or light skin tones and are often mistaken for or assumed to be ethnically White. They may benefit from the advantages that White people are afforded

Example

“Nobody knows I’m Mixed Race because of my skin complexion. I’m White passing, so I don’t experience discrimination for my dual heritage.”

“Being White passing because of my skin tone means I am not discriminated against for my Asian background, unlike my sibling.”

➔ Learn more

gal-dem.com/what-i-have-learnt-from-being-occasionally-white-passing
huffingtonpost.co.uk/entry/white-passing_uk_
vox.com/culture/21358769/vanishing-half-brit-bennett-alisha-gaines-interview-passing

White privilege or White advantage (noun)

? What does it mean?

The ways White people benefit from the societal advantages provided to them because of their race, including freedom from prejudice and discrimination.

This privilege actively contributes to racial inequity and injustice because it is underpinned by systems and structures across all areas of society.

👏 Example

“To address White privilege we need to look at how our own actions maintain and support racist systems and structures.”

➔ Learn more

barnardos.org.uk/blog/white-privilege-guide-for-parents
theguardian.com/news/audio/2020/jun/29/understanding-white-privilege-with-reni-eddo-lodge-podcast

White supremacy (noun)

? What does it mean?

White supremacy was once a phrase only associated with David Duke and the KKK, yet now is a term that has been used by influential writers like Ta-Nehisi Coates and Boston University professor Ibram X. Kendi, to cut through the layers of euphemism and get to the core of history and culture.



My Whole Self

White supremacy is “the belief that White people constitute a superior race and should therefore dominate society, typically to the exclusion or detriment of other racial and ethnic groups, in particular Black or Jewish people.”
(From Oxford English Dictionary)

Not all beliefs are conscious, and due to systemic racism Whiteness is often seen as the default and in turn creates an ‘othering’ of those who are not White.

Example

“While the Civil War ended legal White supremacy in the United States, it continued to be enforced by White militant groups such as the KKK.”

Learn more

[npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/12/08/671999530/what-the-ebbs-and-flows-of-the-kkk-can-tell-us-about-white-supremacy-today](https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2018/12/08/671999530/what-the-ebbs-and-flows-of-the-kkk-can-tell-us-about-white-supremacy-today)



Xenophobia (noun)

What does it mean?

Dislike of, or prejudice towards, people from other countries.

Example

“This group is assisting communities to promote positive images of refugees and combat racism and xenophobia.”

Learn more

[merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/xenophobia-and-racism-difference](https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/xenophobia-and-racism-difference)
youtu.be/4Aicki4a4ul



MHFA England



What’s the difference between xenophobia and racism?

Xenophobia is “fear and hatred of strangers or foreigners or of anything that is strange or foreign.”

Racism has a slightly broader range of meanings, including “a belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capacities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of a particular race,” and “a political or social system founded on racism.”

The meanings of these two words are different enough that a person (or thing, such as a policy) may easily be both racist and xenophobic.
(From Merriam Webster)



What’s the difference between prejudice, discrimination, and racism?

Prejudice is irrational or unjustifiable negative emotions or evaluations toward people from other social groups, and it is a primary determinant of discriminatory behaviour (**Fiske, Gilbert, and Gardner, 2010**).

Discrimination is inappropriate treatment of people because of their actual or perceived group membership. This may include both overt and covert behaviours such as microaggressions, or indirect or subtle behaviours that reflect negative attitudes or beliefs about a non-majority group.

Racism is prejudice or discrimination against individuals or groups based on beliefs about one’s own racial superiority, or the belief that race reflects inherent differences in attributes and capabilities. Racism is the basis for social stratification and differential treatment that advantage the dominant group; White people.

Racism can take many forms, including explicit racial prejudice and discrimination by individuals and institutions (e.g. Jim Crow laws after the Reconstruction). Racism can be structural or environmental, such as in policies or practices that foster discrimination and reinforce social inequalities (e.g. attendance policies that favour a majority group).

Racism can also take the form of unconscious beliefs, stereotypes, and attitudes toward racial groups in the form of implicit bias. Examples of this might be assuming someone who speaks non-standard English is less intelligent, or responding fearfully to behaviour of non-White people (**Staats, Capatosto, Wright, and Jackson, 2016; Fish and Syed, 2019**).

Having conversations about race

Responding to racist remarks with anti-racism

(Adapted from [Everyday Racism](#))

All lives matter!

Did you know that this phrase was coined by the far right in response to the BLM movement? You're reinforcing White supremacy by saying this.

Black Lives Matter is a political movement!

Did you know the BLM movement started in 2012 by three Black women after George Zimmerman was acquitted of the murder of Trayvon Martin, a Black teenager from Florida?

The BLM organisation has grown and is a decentralised political and social movement advocating for non-violent civil disobedience in protest against incidents of police brutality and all racially motivated violence against Black people.

However, Black Lives Matter as a principle is caring about the equal treatment of Black people and their lives.

What gives you the right to tell me what I can or cannot say?

When we are in the same space, I have the right not to have to listen to offensive comments. For me it's about respecting other people. Racism is a deal breaker for me.

I'm not racist, my friend/partner/family member is Black.

Having a Black friend, partner, family member, etc. doesn't mean you don't still have racist attitudes. All of us have conscious and unconscious bias. The important thing is to recognise how it shows up in our life.

What, I can't even say ... now?

It's a lot worse for Black people and People of Colour to have to listen to outdated, and at times, racist words to describe them on a daily basis, just because you don't want to update your vocabulary.

I'm fed up of being made to feel guilty about being White.

Imagine how fed up you would feel if you consistently encountered racism in your daily life. No one wants to make you feel guilty about being White. However, White people do have a responsibility to face up to the injustice that comes with having privileges that Black people and People of Colour don't.

I'm not racist but...

Let me stop you there. If you are having to start a conversation with "I am not... but...", you need to ask yourself why you are having to justify this in the first place. More often than not, it means you are about to say something that contains a racist viewpoint or perspective. Would you ever start a sentence with "I'm not a murderer but"?



Useful phrases

(Adapted from [Everyday Racism](#))

Could you clarify what you mean by that please?

I/We would be interested in knowing where you got that information from.

Before you carry on, I would just like to address what you just said about... That is something I find very offensive because... and I would like it if you didn't say that anymore.

What you just said made me feel uncomfortable because... and I would appreciate if you didn't say that again.

I/We would like to talk to you more about this. Could we maybe talk in private once (x) has finished?

You may or may not have meant to come across this way but saying... is actually very insulting.

I/We are learning how to be actively anti-racist and we have realised that saying (x) is not OK. I would suggest reading/following...

Would you mind explaining what you mean by that?

I'd be really interested to chat to you more about this at some point as I think there is more to unpack here.

Have you ever considered...

Please don't say (x) again to me or around me. Saying (x) is not OK.

Tips

- 📌 **Prepare yourself** – if you know someone who is particularly outspoken and racist, then pre-empt some of the things they say or have said in the past and how you can now respond. Go in with the facts and your own examples.
- 📌 **Location** – it's OK to have your conversation away from a crowd. If you're online, you may wish to use the private chat function to message them.
- 📌 **Focus** on facts and real-life experiences. For example, "My friend experiences racism on a daily basis and this is what happened to them". It's harder to argue with someone's lived experience.
- 📌 **Avoid** judgemental language such as "No, you're wrong". Instead, ask for clarity, using questions like "Would you mind clarifying where you got that information from?"
- 📌 **Continue** your conversations another day. You may not change someone's mind from one conversation. It takes time, but it's important not to give up.
- 📌 **Reserve** the right to stop if the conversation is becoming unsafe.

As a member of the BIPOC community you do not have to be responsible to manage these conversations. You have every right to shut down the conversation to protect yourself. Here are some phrases to help:

- 🗣️ "What you just said made me feel uncomfortable because... and I would appreciate it if you didn't say that again."
- 🗣️ "You may or may not have meant to come across like this but saying (x) is actually very insulting. Please can we move on from the conversation?"
- 🗣️ "Before you carry on, I would like to address what you just said about (x). That is something that I find very offensive because x. I would ask if you didn't say that anymore."
- 🗣️ "It is not my responsibility to educate you on this matter. I am happy to advise you on some books/podcasts/anti-racist educators who have dedicated their time to educating people on racism."



Proactive vs. reactive allyship

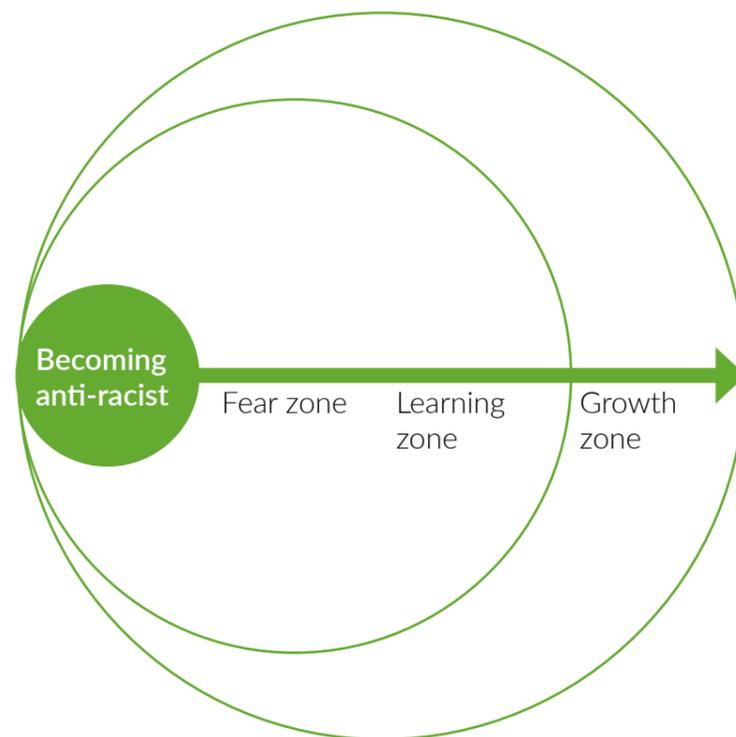
(Adapted from [Everyday Racism](#))

Reactive allyship

Reactive allyship is acting in a way that looks like you're doing the work but in essence you're not doing anything at all (see performative allyship). It usually consists of a quick response that a person is affected by in that moment. Once that conversation or event is over they will move on quickly.

The intentions can sometimes be good but it hardly ever has a long term effect, and can cause harm to BIPOC.

An example is posting a black square to social media to recognise BLM. Even though it got people talking about BLM, what did it really do? Many people posted a black square and have done nothing since. For others, the black square was a way to feel they have done their part, without having to talk about the real issues.



Adapted from a visual model created by [Andrew M. Ibrahim](#)

Proactive allyship

Being proactive shifts your allyship from being surface level into becoming a fundamental part of your culture. This will help to give you the tools to influence your sphere.

This is where real systemic change comes in. It's a longer-term journey but this will be effective and make lasting change if done right.

Proactive allyship requires planning and strategy, along with action that you follow up consistently. You will need to embed anti-racism work as part of your daily routine.

Examples of proactive allyship

- For those who can, taking anti-racism work offline into your face-to-face interactions
- Having conversations with White friends about racism even when it's not on the agenda
- Ensuring friends and family know you're being actively anti-racist
- Calling out racism when you see or hear it
- Challenging your place of work
- Listening and educating yourself continually

Breaking your echo chamber

An echo chamber is an environment where we only encounter beliefs or opinions that line up with our own. We all feel more comfortable around people who share our views and values. To break your echo chamber, try to:

- Follow people on social media who have different views and experiences to you
- Share what you have learned with people who are not like-minded
- Get offline and meet people outside of your circle
- Fact check your information

Further information

Alternative terms

Adapted from originofalphabet.com

Instead of:	Say:
Black sheep	Renegade
Blackball	Ostracise
Black box	Box of unknown content
Black mark	Tainted
Black Friday	Friday after Thanksgiving
Black and blue	Bruised
Dark	Mysterious, macabre, sad
Dark side	Don't use clichés!
Dark web	Unindexed web
Fair	Equitable
Indian summer	Warm autumn
Throw some shade	Side eye

Consider the origins and implications of the words you choose. Do they reinforce bias, or challenge it?

One way to help eliminate bias is to change our language to no longer use 'black' and 'dark' to mean 'bad'.

Here are some examples of non-inclusive words and phrases to be aware of.



Reading list

- Bringing Up Race: How to Raise a Kind Child in a Prejudiced World – Uju Asika
- Don't Touch My Hair – Emma Dabiri
- How To Be an Antiracist – Ibram X. Kendi
- I am Not your Baby Mother – Candice Brathwaite
- Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India – Shashi Tharoor
- Me and White Supremacy: How to Recognise Your Privilege, Combat Racism and Change the World – Layla Saad
- My Name Is Why – Lemn Sissay
- Traces of History: Elementary Structures of Race – Patrick Wolf
- Whites: On Race and Other Falsehoods – Otegha Uwagba
- Wish We Knew What to Say: Talking With Children About Race – Pragya Agarwal
- Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race – Reni Eddo-Lodge

Resources

- Barnados: [White privilege guide for parents](#)
- Buffer: [An Incomplete Guide to Inclusive Language for Startups and Tech](#)
- Centre for Mental Health: [Commission for Equality in Mental Health](#)
- Joint Committee on Human Rights: [Black people, racism and human rights](#)
- MHFA England: [Becoming an anti-racist organisation](#)
- NHS: [Inclusive language guide](#)
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation: [Racial Equity Resource Guide](#)

Podcasts

iWeigh with Rachel Cargle: earwolf.com/episode/rachel-cargle

Brené Brown and Austin Channing Brown: brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-austin-channing-brown-on-im-still-here-black-dignity-in-a-world-made-for-whiteness

Brené Brown and Ibram X. Kendi: brenebrown.com/podcast/brene-with-ibram-x-kendi-on-how-to-be-an-antiracist

Inclusive Language Guide copyright © 2021, MHFA England CIC
Company registration number 702 1392 mhfaengland.org ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.
Any unauthorised reprint or use of this material is prohibited. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without express written permission from the author/publisher.

