



Anti-Racism Action Guide: What Can I do as a White Person?

The murders of Ahmuad Arbery, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Rayshard Brooks, and countless others and the brazenly racist behavior of a White woman toward a Black birdwatcher, Christian Cooper, have activated an unprecedented emotional response from White and non-Black people. Many have expressed outrage and grief, asking “what can I do to prevent this from happening again?” These events have led many more White people to become aware of existing racial inequities in American society, and to confront, perhaps for the first time, their own privilege.

“White privilege” describes the phenomenon in which people who are White or pass for White have greater access to resources or power than do people of color in the same situation. This privilege is deeply embedded into American culture, defining “normal” standards of beauty, communication, and even health. Yet, it is often invisible to those who hold it, as illustrated in “White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.” White privilege exists because of historic and enduring racism; they are two sides of the same coin. To fight racism, White people must face and dismantle their privilege.

Antiracism requires continued commitment to dismantling white supremacy within oneself, families, workplaces, communities, and culture. We must take the lead from Black voices, past and present, decentering ourselves from the conversation, and taking educated action at all levels. At the individual level, anti-racism may consist of educating oneself about the history of racial bias and injustice in the U.S. and the concept of race-related micro-aggressions (for examples, see <https://www.microaggressions.com>). At the interpersonal level, anti-racism may feature education of others and acting as an upstander (rather than a bystander) when witnessing racial discrimination or bias (e.g., others’ micro-aggressions). In organizations and communities, anti-racism work requires examination of policies and practices to determine whether they contribute to racial inequities, and advocacy for those that promote equity and inclusion.

It is also important to acknowledge the pain and doubt our anti-racism advocacy can activate in Black Americans, as the violence against Black life and systemic oppression has been ever present in America since the Transatlantic Slave Trade. As such, we must consider, why are we acting now? Are our anti-racist actions genuine or performative? Are we seeking improved credibility or credible improvements? Are we in it for the long haul or only for a moment?

This anti-racism action guide includes a series of action items for White people committed to change. Helpful resources are also included.

TIPS: WHAT TO DO NOW

Seek Education with Openness

- Seek out education regarding how the oppression of Blackness has continued to be perpetuated before you can take effective action
- “Decolonize your bookshelf” (Henny, 2020)
 - Read [literature](#) relevant to blackness, antiblack racism, and white supremacy
 - Purchase both [non-fiction](#) and [fiction](#) literature from Black authors
- Diversify your media consumption
 - Seek out [Black news and media outlets](#)
 - Follow Black content creators (i.e., [social media](#), [artists](#), [YouTube](#), and [podcasts](#))
 - Credit and pay for your consumption
- Watch online [educational talks](#) featuring Black speakers
- Attend relevant lectures, teach-in, and webinars
- Familiarize yourself with racial equity terms such as “white privilege,” “white silence,” “tone policing,” “white fragility,” and “microaggressions”
- Learn about your local government and identify the ways in which oppression is being maintained at institutional and structural levels

Engage in Self-Exploration

- Explore your relationship to whiteness and the ways in which you have been conditioned to benefit from white supremacy
- Process your emotions related to your whiteness
 - Consider using journaling, structured workbooks, or a peer
 - Avoid leaning on BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) peers to help you with this emotional labor
- Identify the ways in which you can undo this conditioning
- See our “Self-Exploration” Action Guide for additional tips regarding self-exploration as a health professional

Talk with Other White People

- Use “caucusing” as a structured way to examine critically the role of white culture and white privilege by providing space for people to work within their own racial/ethnic groups
 - Use caucusing within either professional or personal communities as a tool for social justice
- Normalize discussing race and exploring whiteness by talking to family members, friends, and colleagues.
- Have “difficult conversations”

- Speak up when you witness acts of injustice, or hear speech grounded in intolerance or ignorance
- Remember, white silence is consent to the status quo
- Post about anti-racism on your social media platforms, amplify BIPOC voices, and invite people to discuss their positions
- Take what you have learned from your education and explore how anti-blackness shows up in your communities of impact.

Plan to Remain Committed to Anti-Racist Action - “The revolution is not a one-time event”- Audre Lorde

- Make a [plan](#)
- Ask yourself
 - How will I make time for this work?
 - How will I remain accountable?
 - How will I seek out education?
 - Who will I reach out to for support?
 - How will I remain committed when it becomes overwhelming?

Evaluate How You Use your Money

- Support [Black-owned businesses](#).
- Hold companies you purchase from accountable and inquire as to how are they dismantling white supremacist systems within their company (i.e., Black leadership, equal pay)
- Seek out Black-owned alternatives

Support Black-led Groups

- Resource grassroots Black-led groups doing Anti-Racist work (i.e., donate money, supplies, time, skills)
- Pay and credit Black individuals for their work
- Show up to their events and share their information

RESOURCES

EDUCATE YOURSELF

Henny, A. (2020, January 2). Here are four things that you can do to de-colonize your bookshelf this year [Facebook post]. Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/allyhennypage/posts/1423637697786536>

Kendi, Ibram X. (2019). *How to Be An Anti-Racist*. One World.

Saad, Layla F. (2020). *Me and White Supremacy: Combat Racism, Change the World, and Become a Good Ancestor*. Sourcebooks.

Fizzy Mag’s List of Inspiring Black Content Creators To Follow Right Now:: <https://fizzymag.com/articles/10-inspiring-black-content-creators-to-follow-right-now>

Harvey, J. (2017). *Raising white kids: Bringing up children in a racially unjust America*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press

Oluo, Ijeoma (2018). *So you want to talk about race*.

ENGAGE IN SELF-EXPLORATION

DiAngelo, R. (2018). *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism*. Beacon Press.

McIntosh, P. (2007). White privilege: Unpacking the invisible knapsack.

<http://www.nymbp.org/uploads/2/6/6/0/26609299/whiteprivilege.pdf>

TALK WITH OTHER WHITE PEOPLE

Racial Equity Tools: <https://www.raciaequitytools.org/act/strategies/caucus-affinity-groups>

CNBC's How to Be a Better Ally for your Black Coworkers:

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/06/03/how-to-be-a-better-ally-for-your-black-coworkers.html>

MAKE A PLAN

Medium's List of Ways White People Can Take Action:

https://medium.com/@surj_action/5-ways-white-people-can-take-action-in-response-to-white-and-state-sanctioned-violence-2bb907ba5277

SUPPORT BLACK LED GROUPS

Racial Equality Resource Guide:

<http://www.raciaequityresourceguide.org/organizations/organizations/sectionFilter/Racial%20Healing>

Showing Up For Racial Injustice's List of Black-Led Organizations:

<https://www.showingupforracialjustice.org/black-led-organizations.html>