



How to talk to your family about racism

In 5 Steps!

Step One

The best first step is to find out what they think racism is. Define it. Find out if they currently view themselves as racist. Ask if they would identify as 'Not Racist' and if so, what that means to them. Lastly, ask them what it would mean to be Anti-Racist.



The framework here is important because there's a ton of terrain in between the first and last question.

What you are looking for is for them to come up with the definitions. That way the language is theirs.

Step Two

From there, I would present an argument.

What if Racism was more pervasive than your definition of it - would you be interested in making space to reduce harm?



Then I would lay out the foundation of systemic racism in a very simply, irrefutable way.



“When this world began, and the Euro Colonizers showed up, the goal was to take the land and use it to make money. In doing this, everything was commodified - specifically people. Over time, in order to maintain the balance of power, ruling classes enacted various policies meant to keep one class on top. These policies are Racist policies. Voting. Crime fighting. Housing. Homelessness. Job Equity. ”

An example

Step Three

Now ask them these 5 questions. The first two are Yes, the last three are No. Likely your parents will answer this way.

- ✦ Have they voted?
- ✦ Have they bought a house?

- ✦ Have they been arrested multiple times for crimes that others don't get arrested for?
- ✦ Have they been homeless?
- ✦ Have they ever lost a job due to what they are, as opposed to who they are?

If so, they have benefited from Racist policies.

Potentially sexist policies as well.

In doing so, they have participated in Racism. It seems unavoidable when you put it this way - because it is.

Step Four

With this in mind, how have those same policies made it into their homes, their speech, their actions?

- ✦ Have they encouraged their son to vote, and told him he can be anything he wants to be?
- ✦ Have they taken out loans or lines of credit to help their kids through school?
- ✦ Have they been able to buy more than one home?
- ✦ Have they been able to assume the best or worst about someone without evidence?

These are how Racist policies make it into our home.

Step Five

With all that in mind, given the prolonged exposure to Racist policy and ideology, it is inconceivable that you haven't ingested and manifested it in various ways. Yet, it's out of line with your base definition of Racism (it will be).



So if Racism is an inequity built into the system within which we all engage that disproportionately benefits white people and disadvantages people of color to secure that benefit, is it possible that your outlook has been affected by this and that you too in fact have the capacity to 'be racist' (or perpetuate racist ideology - save that for when they cringe at the word)? The answer is yes.

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Black Lives Matter
Land Back
Free Palestine

