

# Brave Conversations

A Guide for  
Inclusive  
Anti-Racism  
Dialogue



**Brot**  
für die Welt

Brot für die Welt –  
Evangelischer  
Entwicklungsdienst

The Institute for Justice  
and Reconciliation



**IJR**  
THE INSTITUTE  
FOR JUSTICE AND  
RECONCILIATION

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Published by: The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation

105 Hatfield Street, Gardens, 8001, Cape Town, South Africa 021 202 4071

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ISBN number: 978-920219-04-0

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# Dedication

In Memory of the late  
Stan Henkeman



This toolkit is dedicated to the late Stanley (Stan) Henkeman, who was the Executive Director of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) at the time of his passing (18 December 2020). Stan was a champion of social justice and anti-racism work. He initiated the Anti-Racism Project at the IJR and made a great contribution to this toolkit. He was also one of the founding members of ARNSA (Anti-Racism Network of South Africa). We hope to continue his legacy of pursuing justice and reconciliation in South Africa and the world.

## Acknowledgements

The IJR would like to thank and acknowledge its staff and partners who have contributed to the development of this toolkit:

Jodi Williams: Anti-Racism, Social Cohesion & Inclusion Project Leader, IJR 2021

Eleanor du Plooy: IJR Consultant & content editor

Lucretia Arendse: Anti-Racism, Social Cohesion & Inclusion Project Leader, IJR 2020

Kenneth Lukuko: Anti-Racism, Social Cohesion & Inclusion Project Leader, IJR 2018/2019

Felicity Harrison: Sustained Dialogue Programme Manager,

IJR Stan Henkeman: Former IJR Executive Director and member of the Anti-Racism Network of South Africa

Danielle Hoffmeester: Youth Identity Project Leader, IJR

Mikhail Petersen: IJR Intern 2019/2020

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Khayelitsha Peacebuilding Team: Melikhaya Yalwa; Vuyani Mngqete; Abongile Nyumbeka

Africa Unite: Nthathi Lesaoana; Yonela Msongelwa

Institute for the Healing of Memory: Mandla Klanisi

**ARNSA:** Anti-Racism Network of South Africa partner: CANRAD: Sonwabo Stuurman

### **The following communities:**

Elsies River, Bonteheuwel, Wesbank, Mitchell's Plain, Khayelitsha, Langa, Cape Town, Doringbaai, Atlantis, Oudtshoorn and Calittdorp

**Deep thanks and gratitude to our donors who make our work possible.**

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# FORWARD



**Welcome to the Brave Conversation Guide for Inclusive Anti-Racism Dialogue.** A first of its kind for The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR). This guide is aimed at empowering readers with the knowledge, insights, and tools to engage in dialogue on racism. Developed with the South African context in mind, this toolkit brings together the collective wisdom of IJR dialogue participants, dialogue facilitators and IJR colleagues who create and hold space for empowering conversations and healing. This publication aims to inspire critical conversation around racism within a post-Apartheid South African context.

South Africa faces a number of critical challenges that remain linked to its violent history of racial injustice and oppression. The legacies of Apartheid, colonialism and slavery persevere and are best understood through the lived experiences of black and coloured working-class and rural communities. Systemic and structural exclusion, racialised poverty, inequality, economic disenfranchisement and intergenerational trauma are some of the historical legacies that remain intact.

South Africa's political transition of the 1990s ushered in an era of positive social change and a national discourse strongly founded on this notion of 'non-racialism', supporting this idea that South Africa defeated racism and now existed as a post-racist society. While this commonly held assumption played its part in uniting previously divided communities, it did little to undo centuries of racial oppression that remain embedded within our systems of governance, our economy, in our schools, universities, workplaces, in our communities, in our laws, norms, cultures, beliefs and traditions.

The IJR's South African Reconciliation Barometer (SARB) maintains that race persists as one of the biggest dividing factors amongst South Africans. In 2020, South Africa experienced worsening inequality

against the backdrop of rising inflation, systemic corruption and the decline of our social security net. These dire socioeconomic realities continue to affect the poor and most vulnerable in our communities. While covid-19 continues to be a major challenge for all, it is the poor black and coloured South Africans living on the margins that remain the most affected by the crisis. This is indicative of the far-reaching legacies of our apartheid history.

For black people, racism remains a defining reality that dominates almost every aspect of life. The racists that make the headlines expose the overt manifestations of racist attitudes and behaviours in South Africa; amere 'drop in the ocean' when compared to the covert and institutionalised racism experienced by black people. The levels of anger among those who experience racism daily should be understood against this backdrop of perpetual exclusion, marginalisation and dehumanisation.

This resource is intended to be a contribution to ongoing conversations around how we understand racism, how it manifests in society and what the effects are. Furthermore, this resource serves as a guide on how to conduct brave conversations about racism and racial injustice. This resource intends to contribute to shifting narratives, to encourage deeper reflection and to transform attitudes for the creation of new ways of seeing one another and new ways of being.

At the IJR, we believe that change happens incrementally. We believe that change happens through the conscientisation of hearts and minds and through the deliberate and bold actions of people and communities. In the words of Angela Davis, "In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist. Our hope is that this toolkit will empower readers to be unflinching in their anti-racism efforts and to pursue justice boldly.

- Jodi Williams,

# INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

The Institute for Justice and Reconciliation (IJR) was launched in the year 2000, in the wake of South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The aim was to ensure that the lessons learnt from South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy were taken into account as the nation moved ahead. Today, the institute helps to build fair, inclusive and democratic societies through carefully selected engagements and interventions.

The Anti-Racism Project (ARP) of the IJR, launched in 2018 strives to challenge the systemic, institutional and identity manifestations of racism in South Africa, through research, community engagements and ongoing dialogues. This journey is coupled with the use of communication strategies and tactics to ensure that the in-depth work of the project reaches wider audiences, and broadly unpacks the complex nature of racism.

IJR, through its community healing dialogues, has held space for difficult conversations for many years. Drawing on this experience, it explored the process of

facilitating anti-racism dialogues as a way to surface the intersectionality of race, class, gender, ethnicities, histories and religion. These dialogues offered a safer space for unpacking the complex and often painful manifestations and lived experiences of racism in South African communities.

In 2018, the first year of the project's operation, it together with various communities of interest, explored the lived reality of race and racism in South African communities. This culminated in a series of dialogues where experiences of race were explored and unpacked.

This toolkit is a resource for those committed to combating racism and offers guidance on how to hold space for dialogue race and racism. Whether you are a facilitator or reading for interest, we hope that this toolkit will help you better understand how to address racism and how to facilitate formal or informal discussions on these very difficult, sensitive and often uncomfortable issues.

# Breaking down basic concepts



Language has power and words hold meaning. It informs and shapes the way in which we engage with the world and reflects our understanding thereof. In order to enhance the quality of dialogue and discourse on race, it is important that we start from a place of some degree of shared understanding of the terms and concepts that have the power to either engage and support anti-racism work or incite and divide. Here are some basic concepts with which to navigate the complex terrain of holding space for difficult conversations.

## What is racism?

A complex system of beliefs, norms, behaviours and systems grounded in an assumed superiority of whiteness. These beliefs and behaviours are conscious and unconscious; personal and institutional; and result in the oppression of black, coloured and other minority groups to benefit the dominant group/the group in power. A simpler definition is racial prejudice + power = racism.

## What is race?

A political construct created to concentrate power amongst white people and legitimise domination over black people, coloured people and other minority groups

## What is systemic and institutionalised racism?

Racism that exists within political, economic and social systems in society. These includes schools, workplaces, court systems, government policies, sporting codes and other parts of society where white people occupy positions of decision-making power and make up the dominant culture that is practiced.

## What is anti-racism?

Anti-Racism is a life-long commitment whereby people actively confront, challenge and dismantle racist attitudes, behaviours and norms in pursuit of racial justice and equity.

## What is white supremacy?

It is a historical and institutionally perpetuated system of exploitation and oppression of continents, nations and marginalised groups by white people and nations of the European continent; for the purpose of maintaining a system of wealth, power and privilege that benefits people of European descent.

## What is white privilege?

The unquestioned and unearned set of gains and benefits granted to white people solely because they are white. Generally, white people who experience such privilege do so without being conscious of it.

## What is intersectionality?

The idea that various social and cultural categories including gender, race, class, nationality, religion and ethnicity interact and contribute towards systematic social inequality. Intersectionality is a critical consideration for anti-racism efforts as it allows for deeper understanding on how race is experienced alongside other intersecting social and cultural identities.

## What is Intergenerational Trauma?

Trauma which is passed from one generation to another. In the South African context, black and coloured communities have experienced significant trauma under the brutality of Apartheid, colonialism and slavery. This trauma has been passed down from generation to generation.

## What is POC?

An umbrella term for people or persons of colour. It is important to note that the term 'POC' is not a universally accepted term. Critiques of the term 'POC' maintain that this term attempts to lump all racialised groups together as if racism is experienced in the same way by all groups. This umbrella term can undermine the specific experiences of racism by black people, for example. [Refer to anti-blackness for more information].

## What is Xenophobia and Afrophobia?

Xenophobia refers to the hatred of foreigners by citizens of a country. Xenophobia is a manifestation of racism. Racism and xenophobia support each other and they share bigoted discourses. The hatred of foreigners can translate into systemic exclusion and also includes the use of physical violence against foreigners.

Afrophobia refers to the hatred of Africans and the African diaspora. The hatred of Africans can translate into the systemic exclusion of Africans and also includes the use of physical violence against Africans.

## What is anti-blackness and colourism?

Anti-Black racism refers to prejudice, attitudes, beliefs, stereotyping or discrimination that is directed at people of African descent and is embedded in their distinctive history and experience of enslavement, colonisation and Apartheid. Anti-Black racism is deeply embedded in political, economic and social institutions, policies and practices and are part of our systems of governance. Colourism refers to "discrimination against dark-skinned people in favour of those with lighter skin from the same racial group".



# How to use this toolkit

This toolkit is meant to support persons who are committed to combatting racism, by offering guidance on how to hold space for informal and formal dialogue and suggesting further reflection on anti-racism. This toolkit can be used to reflect on the necessary personal work we all need to do to better to combat racism in our spheres of influence. It offers practical tools for effective listening and for taking action to confront racism and proposes dialogue as a process for creating spaces for conversation toward deepening understanding and strengthening relationships across difference.





# It starts with Me

## What is it?

It is important to acknowledge that we each have our own prejudices and biases and it is imperative that we grapple with them before we attempt to deal with the prejudices of others, or before we decide to facilitate dialogues on race. There is no such thing as not having a prejudice towards any person. It is present, whether you are aware of it or not and even if it is subtle. It first requires an awareness of it and then acknowledgement.

### Uncovering personal prejudice and bias

- Think about a prejudice you have, e.g., you don't like people of another race, religion, sexual orientation or culture.
- Write down your prejudice and next to each one, the reason you hold that view.
- Reflect on those reasons and find alternative ways of looking at the view you hold of the people you are prejudice towards. There is a myriad of resources available to consult including books, videos and even others on the same journey as yourself.
- Try to cultivate relationships with those you once had a prejudice/bias towards. This will give you a personal experience of that person.

## Why do it?

Not dealing with personal prejudices and biases could:

- Lead to prejudices being directed to others and risking loss of neutrality in the dialogue.
- Prevent you from effectively facilitating discussions about racism or discrimination.
- Limit your ability to intervene appropriately and fairly, inadvertently reinforcing the prejudicial or racist views.

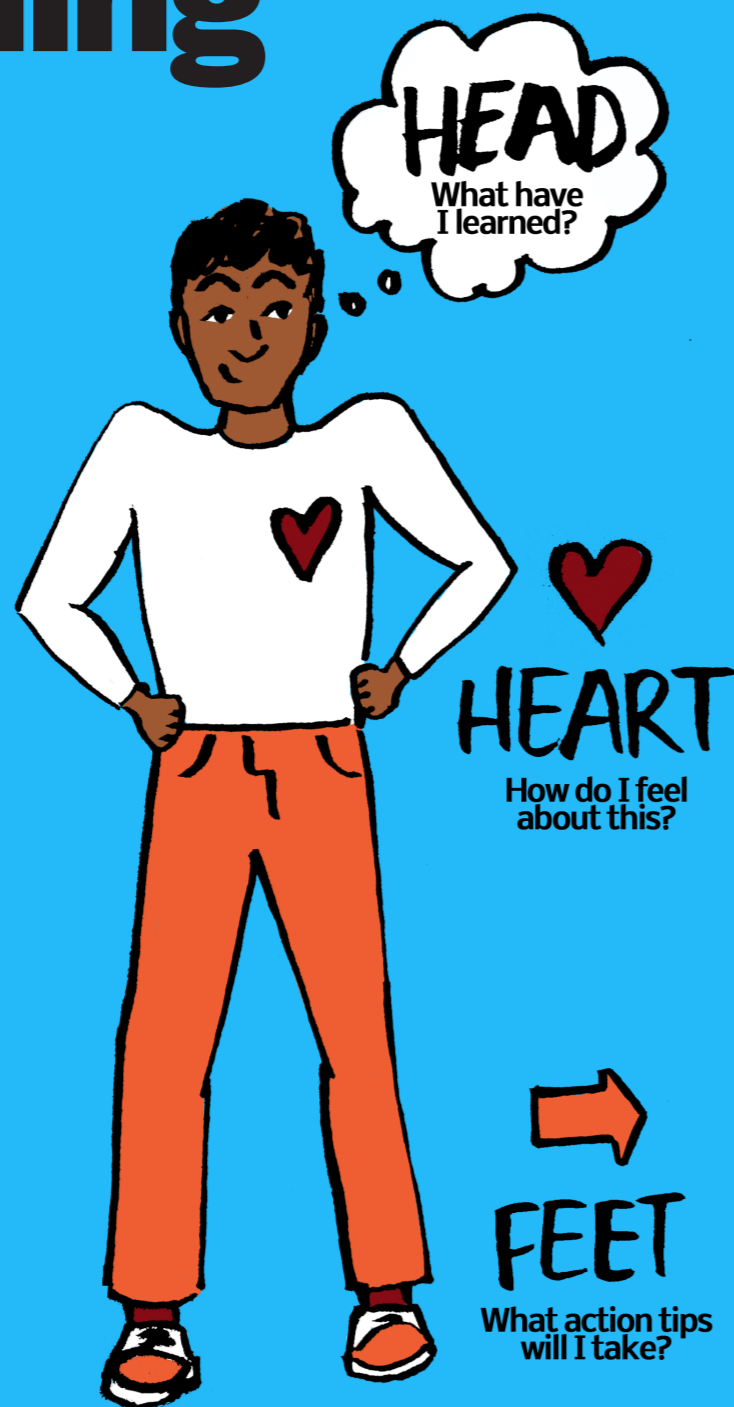
## How to do it.

The way we see and make sense of the world is shaped by our social and religious upbringing, social circles, media exposure, education and literature. Some of these views may hold true and others may not. It is therefore important to be open to changing problematic thinking and shifting actions when needed. Practicing introspection and personal reflection is critical to identifying personal biases or prejudices. It is the first step to being able to facilitate a discussion about racism.



**Go to YouTube and search 'Understanding unconscious bias'**

# Whole Body Listening



## What is it?

A key principle of dialogue is listening. Active listening helps us understand other's perspectives and gives us greater insight into their point of view. Active listening involves using all our senses.

## Why do it?

Using dialogue, we can transform our society through listening, understanding and fostering empathy and respect for all.

## How to do it.

*Head, heart, feet listening*

*Practicing empathic listening means being supportive, kind and caring. Listen carefully and without judgment. Pay attention to what is being said and that left unsaid. Take note of the speaker & emotional state, their tone of voice, and their body language.*

- Listen with your head for facts/perspective of that person.
- Listen with your heart for the emotions of the person. How did they feel? Were they upset, angry, frustrated, glad, appreciative, happy?
- Listen with the feet for the intention of the person. What does the person want going forward? What actions can I take to make this happen?

## Be impartial

Being neutral means you might have your own opinion, but when facilitating a dialogue you reserve/withhold your opinion and try and understand the other person's point of view. You could ask questions in a way that will help you and others better understand what the person is saying.

## Questioning

Racism can be addressed through challenging stereotypical thinking, divisive and hurtful worldviews. Racist worldviews should be challenged by giving alternative ways of perceiving peoples' realities and therefore creating spaces for people to hear other peoples' perspective on how racism affects their lives. One way to challenge racism is to question why people say and do things. This way they are forced to think about their behaviour. Questioning is a powerful medium through which racist behaviour and thinking can be addressed without being antagonist.

## Open and closed-ended questions:

Open-ended questions are questions that can't be answered with a simple yes or no, and instead needs more of an explanation and offers insight into someone else's thinking. Questions that start with what, why, when and how are examples of open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions provide short answers that can provide limited insight. These questions ask for more details about something and are often follow-up questions.

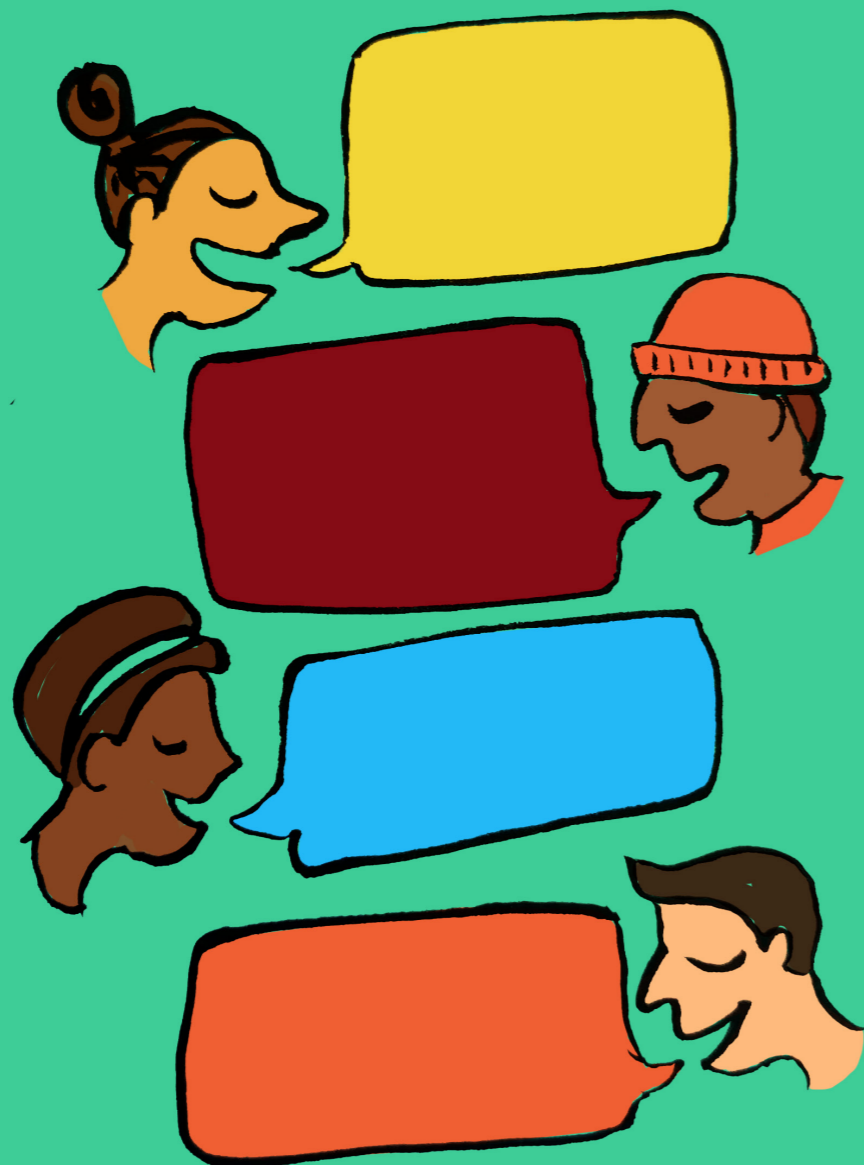
## Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is repeating what someone has said using your own words. It ensures that you understand what the person said and that you are not proceeding based on assumptions. Repeat what the person said in your own words and confirm by asking the person, "Is that what you meant?" or "Do I understand you correctly?"

## Summarise

Try to summarise what the person said in 2-3 sentences. In your own words, briefly explain what someone has said so that everyone in the group has the gist of the story. Do not retell the whole story.

# Dialogue: Create Space to Speak and Listen



South Africa has a long history of violence, oppression and inequality. Being sensitive to the ways in which the past continues to shape the present is a critical component of not only good process facilitation but also a key consideration when talking about race or addressing racism.

*Talking about racism can be uncomfortable and this discomfort should be acknowledged. Talking about racism can also be difficult and should therefore be deliberative. Encourage reflection, understanding of different voices and perspectives, and respect complexity. They will take time so commit to the process.*

Individuals embarking on hosting social justice related dialogues in South Africa must bear in mind the likelihood that participants are carrying with them some level of psychological distress, either as a result of intergenerational trauma or as a result of living within families and communities facing a vast spectrum of social, economic and political hardship. Being conscious of context and sensitive to participants' responses and body language must be a priority for anyone holding space for dialogue.

## What is it?

Dialogue is the process of sharing of peoples' different perspectives on an issue or topic with the aim of gaining understanding and strengthening relationships. A dialogue is not a debate nor a mere conversation. It is a process that welcomes the viewpoint of others even if it is vastly different, delving deeper into the thinking and reasoning underpinning beliefs and assumptions with the aim to deepen understanding. Dialogue is useful in unpacking and understanding people's ways of being, their perspective on issues and their behaviour. It rules out the assumptions we make of others and brings clarity and 'truth' to the story. Effective dialogue can foster new and

strengthen existing relationships. It helps people to better understand the issues and find ways of moving forward, fostering mutual respect for each other.

## Why do it?

Structured dialogues provide participants with a platform to share their personal experiences of racism and to challenge problematic actions. The objective is to help people move from judgement and prejudice to understanding and respect for all. Dialogues on race and its intersectionality are not intended to get people to deny who they are, but to foster mutual respect while still appreciating one's own realities. It is important to shift biased thinking and its accompanying actions. Communities should co-create ways of working together toward finding ways to challenge thinking and actions that perpetuate racism and division. We all bear the responsibility to effect change where we can and to lead this change process from where we are.

## How to do it.

Dialogues are most effective when held in an environment that is conducive to conversation, with clear parameters, a place where people feel comfortable to express themselves, a place free of judgement and where people feel safe enough to be brave. The person facilitating the dialogue is responsible for creating such a space and for ensuring that everyone feels seen and heard. This is by no means an easy process for either the facilitator or the participants; both parties have introspection to do and that can be very uncomfortable. It is also not a process that just anyone can embark on. The facilitator should have a passion to see society transformed, understand the dynamics within a society, understand the impact of racism and be willing to commit to a long term process.

## Creating an environment for participation

In order to create a space that welcomes input and participation, assure the people in the room that:

- They will not be judged by others when they raise sensitive issues.
- All opinions matter, however prejudiced statements will be challenged when raised, i.e., challenge the thinking in a way that allows the responder to open up and not become defensive.
- There will be no name calling, harassment or bullying in the space.

### The 'do no harm principle' in dialogue settings

#### The Ground Rules

Ask participants how they would like to be treated in the space. Let them write it on a piece of paper and you can read it aloud to the group once you've collected all the answers. Encourage shared values that promote inclusion, interaction, tolerance and accountability. Allow participants to ask questions. Encourage participants to embrace diversity and respect difference.

- Ensure ground rules are set. It is important to have ground rules at the beginning of the workshop so that people feel that the space is conducive to sharing and learning. Include principles such as respecting how and what others say, listening to understand rather than listening to respond.
- Ensure confidentiality is agreed amongst all participants.
- Creating a safe space is an important principle in facilitating dialogue in such a way that people are not harmed. Where the dialogue is hosted; how people get there; what people feel in that space can and must be well facilitated to ensure that each participant's well-being and safety is taken into account at all times.

While dialogue can be therapeutic and cathartic, it is important for facilitators to understand that they cannot and are not expected to 'heal' participants. While the display of some emotions is to be expected and can be responded to with basic psychological first aid (Psychological first aid: Guide for field workers, World Health Organisation (WHO)), the facilitator must know when to refer a participant to a more qualified mental health professional.

### Tips for the facilitator on trauma informed dialogue

- **Know your participants.** Do your research. Know where people are coming from and what the common challenges are in the communities in which they live.
- **Be prepared.** Try, if possible, to pre-empt the issues that will be raised by participants and how others might respond.
- **Set the tone of the dialogue** by being open, friendly, warm and inviting. Your body language and tone will contribute significantly to the atmosphere in the room.
- **Build relationships.** Ensure the opening exercise allows for some level of familiarisation and trust-building. During the introductions, encourage people to offer some personal information with one another. This will help people feel connected to one another.
- **Balance.** Once the dialogue gets going, ensure that everyone has a chance to speak. Observe those who dominate and gently nudge them to listen more and speak less.
- **Affirm people** when they have spoken with short statements such as "I hear you" or "Thank you for sharing that". Do this especially when you can sense that people are getting emotional.
- **Breathe and break.** Ensure that your programme has set break-times so you can respond to individuals who may need additional attention.

## Dialogue Activity: Identity markers and understanding intersectionality

*People have trauma around multiple, complex issues and although you may not be a trained psychologist, you do need to understand your position and the power you hold as facilitator. In order to create a safer space means understanding and considering the pervasive nature of trauma and to actively promote an environment of empathy and healing.*

### What is it?

This identity markers\* activity allows space for people in the group to discuss their different identities and to understand, on a more interpersonal level, the experiences of others. It allows us to demonstrate that even people who identify in the same way, may experience different levels of (self) consciousness around a particular identity.

### Why do it?

Using this activity will help us learn to talk about how we experience our identities on a day-to-day basis.

### How to do it.

Before the session begins, hang identity signs around the room. E.g., on one wall have a sign that reads 'RACE', on another corner or wall, 'RELIGION' and another wall, 'GENDER'. Have other identities like ETHNICITY, CLASS, NATIONALITY, CULTURE, LANGUAGE, SEXUAL ORIENTATION.

#### 1. Explain the activity to the participants:

- There are different identity categories hung up around the room - (name each identity category you have put up).
- When we are ready to start, I'm going to ask you all to stand up and I'm going to read out a question that has a blank in it.
- You will then move under the sign that best fills in that blank.

#### 2. Starting the activity:

- Get everyone to stand up.
- Read out the first question (see guiding questions below) - clarify what you would like

people to do, i.e., "Please move to the identity marker you are most aware of on a daily basis."

- c. Ask if anyone would like to talk about why they choose that identity or what their lived experience is. Allow for a few different people to share their thoughts. Allow for as many responses as time allows. Before you want to move on, let people know that someone will be the last one to talk, "Billy do you want to share before I ask another question?" This allows for a smoother transition.
- d. Repeat with another question.
- e. After the last question and response, move into debriefing

### Examples of guiding questions

1. The part of my identity that I am most aware of on a daily basis is\_\_\_\_\_.
2. The part of my identity that I am the least aware of on a daily basis is\_\_\_\_\_.
3. The part of my identity that was most emphasised or important in my family growing up was \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The part of my identity that I wish I knew more about is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. The part of my identity that garners me the most privilege is \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The part of my identity that I believe is the most misunderstood by others is \_\_\_\_\_.

7. The part of my identity that I feel is difficult to discuss with others who identify differently \_\_\_\_\_.
8. The part of my identity that makes me feel discriminated against is \_\_\_\_\_.

### Debriefing the exercise

1. Debrief the activity. Ask what people found surprising about the activity, or if anyone had anything more to add.
2. People often mention that they didn't realise how much they have in common with one another or that they were surprised about how they answered the questions.
3. Build on comments that may have been highlighted. Draw parallels where appropriate. Do not use language that says one experience is harder than the other. The important element is that we can all have similar or shared experiences with our identities even when the identities are incredibly different.

*It is important that this activity focuses on the different identity experiences and not on comparing the experiences of the different individuals. One person's experience is not less severe or more important than another's, and it is important to keep the questions to be about everyone's individual truths.*

# Dialogue Activity: Meals for change

*The Meals for Change concept is derived from the NG Klerk's 'Peace Meal', which was used to bring different race groups together to share their stories over a meal.*



### What is it?

Meals for Change allows for participants to share their stories over a meal. The meal creates a relaxed and calming atmosphere where participants are encouraged to listen while others share their life stories or experiences. Participants are encouraged to use active listening in order to 'listen' to others' points of view.

### Why do it?

This activity creates an opportunity for diverse groups of people to come together to share their stories in a relaxed and informal setting. It helps to foster greater understanding and empathy for peoples' lived experiences and challenges by hearing people's stories first-hand.

### How to do it.

- Invite participants from diverse backgrounds to attend, i.e., from different social backgrounds, various ages (16+ years), diverse gender identities, religious backgrounds and different levels of education.

- Ask participants to share their stories by answering the following questions: Participants should introduce themselves to the group, share who they are, their hobbies or interests etc.
- Share your experiences of life as a black, coloured, Indian/Asian or white person. How does your race affect you?
- Share your story of how someone was racist/ prejudice towards you.
- How did that make you feel and why?
- What do you think the person should have done instead?
- What is your dream for your country? How you can contribute to that dream?

The rest of the participants can only ask questions of clarity and not debate with the storyteller's perception of the event. If you have other facilitators, ask them to help the group keep to the allocated time.

- When half of the group has finished sharing their stories, have a 15-minute stretch break.
- Tell participants what time you will resume the session. Now ask the second half of the participants to share their stories - 5 minutes each, answering the same questions.

### Open session:

Conclude the session with a 20 - 30 minute plenary discussion where the entire group comes together. Volunteers share their experiences of the activity. Have probing questions like:

1. How did it make you feel that others were listening to you tell your story?
2. What stood out for you the most from all the experiences you've heard today?
3. What is the one thing you will do differently because of what you heard today?

- You may incorporate one or two of the other activities in this toolkit in follow-up dialogues.

# Dialogue Activity: Outdoor learning and reflection



## What is it?

Outdoor learning is a broad term that includes discovery, experimentation, learning about and connecting to the natural world, and engaging in environmental and adventurous activities. Outdoor learning involves the transferal and transformation of knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours and ideas through direct engagement with the outdoor environment for the personal and social benefit of individuals, families, communities, society, and the planet. This dialogical methodology is more than adventure sports or physical activities, and includes taking what happens indoors, outside. Outdoor learning is a nature-based dialogical approach to improve creative thinking and problem-solving, to foster interpersonal and relational development, and remove the barriers that may exist between facilitator and participant(s) or between participants within the ordinary dialogue space. What is said outdoors cannot bounce back to the participant(s), unlike an indoor session. The stories told and shared outside are released and carried by the wind, and unable to boomerang back to the speaker. Outdoor learning and reflecting allows participants and facilitators to look inward and outward, explore their internal-selves and the physical world around them. It allows for participants and facilitators to tap into their inherent knowledge, creativity and lived experiences. This methodology is a form of decolonising dialogue as it challenges top-down approaches to engaging. Instead, this activity encourages the co-creation of ideas, draws on indigenous knowledge systems, oral history and intergenerational memory. Outdoor

learning creates moments for healing and for the fostering of empathy towards self, others and the environment/community.

## Why do it?

This activity can help create a safer space for learning and reflecting, and the sharing of personal stories, knowledge and experiences. Participants are able to develop and foster a deeper sense of understanding and empathy toward the self, others and the natural environment. This can also encourage personal growth and healing as a result of reflecting on and sharing personal stories in a safe space.

## How to do it.

### Preparation

Gather participants outside, preferably in the early hours of the morning before the sun reaches its peak. Explain the aims for the activity that will take place outdoors and go over its benefits. Prepare prompts or conversational questions and disseminate it, if necessary. In doing so, it will assist participants to get to know one another more deeply. Prepare indemnity forms and ask participants to complete it, if they wish to participate in the outdoor activity.

### Materials needed

- A local guide who can teach participants about the indigenous flora found and link it to the social history of the town/ city/ country.
- Bottles of water.

### For the facilitator to note:

- People have different capabilities and levels of

mobility and not each person may be able to participate in the activity/activities outside. Tailor this activity to fit your context. This exercise asks participants to walk through the natural terrain, but if it is impossible to do, consider an outdoor meditative exercise.

- Encourage participants to wear comfortable clothes and shoes, and a hat to protect against the sun if it will be hot on a day.
- Ideally, this activity will require at least two facilitators to accompany the group to ensure that the aims set out at the beginning of the exercise are being met as far and as best as possible.
- This activity is an inclusive activity. Be sensitive to that and address incidents of exclusion, silencing, shaming and othering. Check in routinely and butterfly (quietly move) between groups and conversations.
- Discourage participants from wandering off on their own and/or from marching ahead without the rest of the group. If that is done, it will defeat the desired outcome to foster empathy and relationship building.
- Encourage the participants to speak to someone they have not yet conversed with. Here you can give questions or conversation prompts and ask participants to share it with the rest of the group in the following session, if they are comfortable to do so.
- Make sure there is follow-up support and a proper debriefing after the session. Do not do another intense activity after this, but rather do something light and uplifting. Ideally, it will be good to serve lunch or a light snack after this activity.

# Take action to confront and challenge racism



It may be difficult to be entirely rid of prejudice and discrimination, but we can certainly try and challenge people's racist thinking and behaviours. The aim is to help all of us move to an anti-racist perspective, one where we challenge racist thinking and reject societal norms that perpetuate racism, in policy and practice. Our aim is to shift the racist, prejudiced, discriminatory mindset to a mindset that respects the dignity and humanity of all.

## How to do it?

### Practical ways to challenge racism

Below are a few practical ways to address racist thinking and behaviour:

1. Call out racist behaviour and thinking when it happens and if it is safe to do so. Learn to challenge the perpetrators way of thinking through empathic questioning.
2. Do your own research into understanding the history of slavery, colonialism and apartheid in South Africa. Help others understand how this history has and continues to shape our thinking. Ideas about superiority and inferiority as it

*Practicing empathic listening means being supportive, kind and caring. Listen carefully and without judgment. Pay attention to what is said and that left unsaid. Take note of the speaker & emotional state, their tone of voice, and their body language.*

relates to race affects all of us and there is a need for much learning and un-learning across the spectrum.

3. Advocate for structural and institutional change at a local level (communities) and at a policy (government) level, through policy reform. The current structures have to be dismantled and decolonised. Economic and social equity is the goal.
4. Promote dignity and respect for all people irrespective of race, gender, religion or other identities.
5. White people must do their own work on anti-racism and find their own ways to bring about transformation in society. They must not look to marginalised groups to provide the answers.
6. Facilitator and participants must commit to an ongoing process of dialogue and this is not a once off event.
7. As a facilitator of these discussions, you MUST have done introspection on your own prejudices and biases and be respectful of different opinions.
8. Communities are traumatised so it is important to create a space for people to share freely. Create a space where opinions are respected, but mindsets are challenged.
9. Be open to learning new things. Be humble and be teachable.
10. The participants know the way forward. You don't have to prescribe to them or enforce your process, but offer guidance where needed.
11. Let's co-create a society where everyone is respected and treated with dignity and equality.



# Practicing Anti-racism in your everyday life

*In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist.*  
- Angela Davis



Anti-racism work is a life-long commitment and process. To be anti-racist means to embrace and practice a culture of zero tolerance for racist beliefs, attitudes, behaviours, policies and systems. To be anti-racist means to actively work towards dismantling racism within society.

This section focuses on 6 tips to help you practice anti-racism in your everyday life:

## **Embrace a culture of life-long learning and unlearning**

Learning about the unconscious ways racism presents itself is critical to recognising it and addressing it when it happens. Being anti-racist requires that you embrace this culture of continuous learning while unlearning the harmful cultural norms that we have acquired throughout our socialisation. Educating oneself on how racism is embedded within institutions, economies, education systems and the media remains critical to all anti-racism efforts and mobilisations for change

## **Support communities who face racism**

Supporting people who experience racism in your school, community, workplace, church or mosque is essential for practicing anti-racism. Find ways to create safe spaces for people who experience racism (ie. black, coloured and/or other marginalised groups) to talk about these lived experiences, without fears of being judged or facing damaging consequences. Learn to listen to understand and learn to have compassion for those lived experiences.

## **Practice mindfulness**

Anti-racism is a daily practice and requires a conscious decision to pursue it as a way of being.

Intention brings mindful awareness to what we say and what we do. Setting the intention to have an open heart and open mind in order to be anti-racist affects how one shows up. Practicing mindfulness allows us to be present in the moment, removes us out of autopilot and allows us to consciously move towards our goals.

## **Learn how to have uncomfortable and brave conversations about race**

Conversations around race and racism can be uncomfortable for most. Challenge yourself to embrace discomfort. Dismantling racism requires that we be bold and brave in all our efforts including how it is we talk about racism. Challenge yourself to have an open heart, mind and to stretch beyond your 'comfort zone' because this is often where learning and growth can take place.

## **Address microaggressions at work, school or in your community**

Find ways to constructively address microaggressions at work, school or in communities. Learn to speak out against discrimination and injustice. It's important to use these moments as learning moments for perpetrators of racism. Speak to the person directly and make them aware of why this behaviour is harmful and unacceptable.

## **Hold your family, friends, leaders and co-workers accountable**

Challenge yourself to engage in respectful conversations with people in your immediate environment when they make problematic or harmful comments. Utilise different resources (i.e. educational videos, news articles) with more nuanced analysis.

# In Conclusion

Talking about racism can be complex and multi-dimensional. As the saying goes, eat the elephant one bite at a time. Being anti-racist and working toward fostering this in our own sphere of influence requires commitment and time.

It asks that we bravely confront and interrogate our own biases and privilege first.

This work can feel draining even difficult to sustain at the start. What matters however is staying engaged.

This is the only way in which we can show up authentically for ourself and for fellow travellers on this road toward creating the type of world we envisage.

We hope that this toolkit encourages readers to start their own personal journey toward anti-racism, empowers readers with the necessary knowledge to boldly and bravely challenge racism wherever it may manifest and to find ways to sustain this action. We hope that readers will continue learning and stand up for justice, even when difficult or uncomfortable.



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