

# Community Conversation on Racism

## Part 1 – Racism Where We Live

### RESPONSES

The format of this series was designed to allow open and frank dialogue between participants with the agreement not to disclose the identity of anyone in reference to remarks made during these discussions. There was not to be any media reports or documentation other than this summary outline compiled from the information shared during the conversation. The information contributed was used to reflect a profile of the perception of racism and the social determinants of racism. Hopefully this summary can also put light on solutions to develop tolerance, respect and peaceful coexistence between people of different races, genders, religions and/or sexual orientations.

(Questions are indented and participants' responses are in **BLUE**)

Give your definition of racism (or reasons for racism):

Hatred because of someone because of their race or color.

Psychological control. (Mental –mind)

Unknown factors (ignorance).

Many kinds. The newest kinds are convert.

One group having/displaying power through politics, economic and social status.

Racism is taught/not inherited.

Not accepting differences (intolerance).

Hatred is summary (of all) of it.

Misconception (deliberate).

Portrayed negatively.

Religious denomination of all the “perception”.

Actions or failure to act or speech that is a prejudice against ethnic or perceived “racial” groups” and is reinforced by institutional power.

White global supremacy and white domination.

Historical framework to perpetuated “racist condition”.

Racism had no boundaries taught by others: groups established.

Anytime you're discriminated because of differences.

Areas that are stuck and don't grow out of it. Demographic, geographic.

Population dominance.

(Continuation of definition of racism)

A way to keep blacks down.

Racism is going on 24hours, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Any negative act that one nationality has against another.

Share a situation where you believe you had experienced racism or discrimination:

Job discrimination by racial stereotype.

Kept out of job because of race. Hired because of “quotas”.

Race kept out of occupying housing.

Called to rent an apartment and was told to come to see it. Arrived and was told the apartment had been rented. Expressed frustration, threatened to call the Consumer Protection Agency and was given the apartment.

At work and applying for jobs.

As a child hearing white teachers in school talking in derogatory tones about African American children, calling them “Schwartz’s”.

Incarceration of a race, also testing school students for potential of future incarceration.

Unfair employee disciplinary actions because of race (a white worker was suspended 3 days with pay; the black worker was suspended 2 weeks without pay for same offense).

Called racially derogative names. There is no name you can call whites equal to the damage of a black being called the “n” word.

Racial bigotry in the work place.

Unbalanced distribution of menial task at workplace.

Neighborhood considered dangerous because of increasing minority residents.

Unbelievable work hazards.

The day the “not guilty” verdict was given at the O. J. Simpson murder trial. Blacks where shown in the news reports cheering that Simpson won (beating a judicial system that some blacks perceive as unfair to minorities). White appeared upset that Simpson was found not guilty. This appeared to be one of the most racially divided days in the U.S. since the civil war.

Share a situation where you may have acted racist or discriminated:

Treating others according to stereotypes

At work, looked at the person and not their qualifications.

(Continuation of experiences with racism/discrimination)

Made unwarranted assumptions about people based on their looks even though having direct experiences that contradicted those assumptions. (e.g. – being shocked of a new friend's ethnicity because of their physical features. Also surprised that a friend's skin color did not indicate they are bi-racial.

Acting cruel and ignorant toward other minorities because of the citizenship status.

Using education and other advantages to 'put others down'.

What solutions do you think can help to eliminate the impact of racism and discrimination?  
(Example: tougher laws protecting civil rights; reparations for slavery in the form of money, free healthcare or free higher education; revamp or remove affirmative action laws; deportation of non-citizens or expedited citizenship, etc...)

Speaking out /taking a stand publicly (against racism and discrimination).

Coming together and loving each other.

Making changes we can see, not just talking about it.

Directly involved to increase racial balance and input.

Attending meetings and being represented at those meetings.

Demanding not asking for justice.

Establishing an action. More than talk.

Political representation of minorities.

Return to traditions.

Healthcare and education at higher levels as a right, not a privilege.

National youth service for all (volunteer or stipend) for a year between high school and college to benefit all.

Some form of reparations could help (though it could be hard to administer).

Diversity training in all areas of one's life.

Engage others (minorities and others discriminated against).

Standup and call it what it is.

Tougher civil rights laws. Stricter laws against discrimination.

Having a dialogue (like the community conversation on racism) to understand one another.

Reparations for slavery.

Statistical profile of participants in attendance at the "Racism Where We Live" conversation (as indicated on response form):

Male 85%      Female 15%

89% African American/Black

3% American Indian/ Alaskan Native

0% Asian or Pacific Islander

8% Hispanic/Latino

0% Caucasian/White

Less than 1% indicated "bi-racial" or "mixed"

Religion

Christian: 50%      Jewish: 0%      Muslim: Less than 0.5%

Other: Less than 0.5 % indicated Unitarian Universalist faith

More than 48% did not indicate a religion.

1. 100% of the participants made use of and completed the questionnaire as well as participation in the discussion.
2. No one indicated a problem with attending 7pm Monday night sessions of the Community Conversation on Racism. The next session, "Racism in the Workplace" is planned for April 19, 2010.
3. Location and admission will be provided with pre-registration.

### Comments

The questionnaire was used as a framework to stimulate dialogue in the conversation. The guidelines for exchange in the conversation were as follows:

Everyone was instructed to limit each response to three (3) minutes per contribution.

"Verbal sparring" was allowed, however limited to three minutes per contribution/response.

"Venting" was also allowed and encouraged abiding by the 3 minute limit.

Panelist would be allowed to respond to each contribution/ response shared or directed to anyone.

Absolutely no "teaming up" against anyone speaking, one-on-one verbal sparring only.

When time is called by moderator to stop talking, STOP!

Additional Remarks:

The overall gathering went on for about two hours and could have went longer, however in respect for the time of day and the distance some traveled to participate, the timeframe was suitable.

The exchanges were passionate at times during the discussion, yet everyone held to the guidelines and a straw poll afterwards reflected that everyone was positive about the conversation and is looking forward to participating in the next session with a desire to bring others into the talks.

It was encouraged that participants continue discussion outside of the venue however continue to confidentiality in regards to others who spoke during the session.

If you wish to participate in this series or want assistance starting your own community conversation on racism, contact us. Please feel free to use this information to continue a successful dialogue and hopefully resolve issues concerning racism and discrimination.

Best regards,

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