

TALKING TO YOUR CHILD ABOUT RACISM



Racism is a challenging subject for all who have been directly and/or indirectly affected by it. It is the complexity of the subject that parents are often apprehensive to discuss such issues with their children. However, it's important to teach children about racism for many reasons, including ensuring that they know to seek support if they experience or witness racism.

WHAT IS RACISM?

Childline (2020) defines racism as the belief that a person is inferior because of their race, ethnicity, nationality. This can result in a person being treated differently or unfairly and comes under the category of racial discrimination.

WHAT IS RACIST BULLYING BEHAVIOUR?

They also define racist bullying behaviour as a type of racism where someone's bullying behaviour focuses on a person's race, nationality, ethnicity, or culture. Racist bullying behaviour can include:

Racist names or slurs

- Personal attacks including acts of violence towards a person/group of people
- Exclusion from social groups/opportunities/invitations/resources
- A person being made to feel shame around their appearance, communication to conform to another race, culture, ethnicity, or nationality's practices
- Racist jokes about skin tone, hair texture, accent, race, culture, ethnicity, or nationality

Children are likely to be worried, scared, shocked, and confused with some of the recent world events that have been exposed i.e. the recent surge in the Black Lives Matter Movement, which they are likely to have heard from social media, the news, and their peers. As much as we want to protect our children from some of the negative aspects of reality, it is best to challenge this behaviour by informing them of these events in a way that they can understand.

However, anti-racism movements are not a new practice, they have been around for generations and have slowly, but surely made positive incremental leaps for people of difference races, cultures, ethnicities, and nationalities. Furthermore, eradicating racism is not merely the act of supporting campaigns, it is about challenging the status quo, so that discussions about race, inequality and respect can be made to eliminate racism and thereby embracing a better future for all.

Depending on the age, learning ability and race of your children, the narrative will differ slightly in context. According to Childrens.com (2020) a good start to tackling racism is to start the conversation.

STARTING THE CONVERSATIONS EARLY AND OFTEN

We live in a multi-racial society and we engage with people of difference races, ethnicities, cultures, and nationalities on global, national, and local scale. Practise an ongoing dialogue with your child/ren. The more this is practised the more it gives an opportunity for your child/ren to speak on such subjects naturally.

Utilise Educational Resources

There are a variety of sources that introduce the concept of race and racism. Engage regularly on films and books to further encourage conversation. Other habits could include travelling to museums, attending multi-cultural events, trying different foods, and/or learning a new language.

Expand Your Social Circle

Children emulate what they see their parents do. As a parent, if you are surrounded by authentic, healthy relations from people of different cultures, races, ethnicities and/or nationalities then your child/ren will be more likely to do so.

Be the Change You Want to See in the World

Teaching your child/ren respect requires you as the parent to model good behaviour. Have respectful interactions with people and hold yourself accountable for anything said ignorantly or mistakenly.

Respect Your Child's Feelings

Lastly, racism and violence towards people of different races, cultures, nationalities and/or ethnicities can be very upsetting for a child or anyone to learn. It is important to listen kindly and validate your child's/ren's concerns without being dismissive. Acknowledge what is happening and let them know that is okay to feel the way they do.

It's important not to shy away from these conversations. We must have open and honest conversations about race and racism in order to tackle racism. Hopefully, by following the steps above, you can begin a dialogue with your children about racism that will encourage them to reach out to you if they experience or witness racist bullying behaviour in the future.

References_

Childrens.com – How to Talk to Children about Racism, Available from <https://www.childrens.com/health-wellness/how-to-talk-to-children-about-racism> accessed 16/09/20

Childline – What are Racial and Racist Bullying? Available from: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/bullying-abuse-safety/crime-law/racism-racial-bullying/> - Accessed 17/09/2020

We're proud to be the only charity set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. It's a big mission but there are two things within it that we focus our charity's efforts on – young people and change.

Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives, 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours.

We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit diana-award.org.uk/donate

Give us feedback on this resource:
<https://tinyurl.com/ab-feedback>



[/antibullyingpro](https://www.facebook.com/antibullyingpro)



[@antibullyingpro](https://www.instagram.com/antibullyingpro)



[@antibullyingpro](https://twitter.com/antibullyingpro)



[/antibullyingpro](https://www.youtube.com/antibullyingpro)

The Diana Award is a registered charity (1117288 / SC041916) and a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales number 5739137. The Diana Award's Office, 1 Mark Square, London EC2A 4EG.

All images and text within this resource © The Diana Award and cannot be reproduced without permission.