

The Talking about Racism: Unmasking the Elephant in the Room - A series of six interactive and progressive workshops exploring racism in contemporary American society.

American racism is at the foundation of our partisan political system and is the factor most responsible for the election and popularity of our current president. Systemically embedded in the original fabric of the “promised” democratic freedoms, racism has morphed from the overt de jure discrimination of enslavement and Jim Crow into a sophisticated state and federal apparatus that uses brutality, imprisonment and legislation to keep its “colored” populations under control. The rise and “official” sanction of White nationalism, the backlash that is terrorizing immigrants and contracting U.S. immigration policies, the growing inequalities in wealth, political representation, educational opportunities, and access to employment, healthcare and housing between people of color and whites indicates a rising wave of regression and repression that undermines democratic ideals and diminishes the freedom of all. America is not in a “post-racial” stage of development and the election of Barack Obama was not the “triumph” of a colorblind American culture.

Science has destroyed the biological myth of race. As an American society, we continue to allow racism to divide us to our peril. The climate crisis, the rise of the business oligarchs and the proliferation of technology all predict a future where cooperation and community are critical. These workshops will explore the concepts underlying the idea and reality of race and racism in America. The political and historic footprint of racism will be traced and we will look at the policies and practices that have kept racism alive and well in American society. We will address our own attitudes, implicit biases and family stories. We will focus on what it means to become anti-racist and explore conversational approaches to talking about race with our neighbors and friends. These workshops are open to people of all backgrounds.

Each workshop will be experiential and complete in its entirety. The series is intended to build on the knowledge base of each segment but participants can come to workshops sequentially or to individual sessions.

Timeslot – 3 hours

Session One – The development of the Atlantic Slave Trade and the notion of race – the making of a myth – racism as a tool of labor management, the invention of Whiteness –

Implicit Bias and the development of racialized identity

What is race talk – dynamics and characteristics of

Why don't we talk about race – protocols, avoidance strategies?

Session Two – Master Narrative vs Back Story – how are perceptions shaped?

Family stories

Vulnerability

Micro-aggressions – identify, use and function – Practice

Session Three –Color Blind is Color Mute – the myth of meritocracy – who is an immigrant?

Stereotypes and Power Evasion

Equity vs Equality – Systemic Inequities

Session Four – The “new racism” – Exploring the idea of a “Post racial” America

White rage – Voter suppression, mass incarceration/the re-segregation of schools

Issues for Black/POC participants – Issues for White participants

Community Building

Session Five: Guidelines, Conditions and Solutions for Honest Racial Dialogues

Having Difficult Discussions, Processing new information, self-compassion

Talking to children about racism

Session Six: Building Lasting Bridges – Where are we now and where can we go?

Identifying and Targeting Racism

In our family circles

In our institutions and affiliations

How we invest and spend our money

Practicing what we preach – Family circles – next steps

Wrap us - Evaluation