



**NATIONAL DIVERSITY COUNCIL**  
An inclusive community, a better nation

# RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE BLACK COMMUNITY AS AN ALLY

Best practices and resources to help you, and your organization navigate becoming an ally

***“In a racist society it is not enough to be non-racist, we must be anti-racist”***

- Angela Davis  
Activist, Author & Professor

**Please note, this is an active resource guide. As we garner more feedback, find new sources, and learn new things, we will continue to edit and change the guide as we see fit.**

## **Educate yourself on Black history and strive to understand all systemic challenges Black Americans face**

### **Seek out sources written by members of the Black community**

Black history has often been written about from the perspective of White individuals. Make sure you focus on sources written by members of the Black community. Below is a list of things to get you started, but of course, is not comprehensive.

### **Educate yourself on key issues, figures, and events**

Read up on important figures in the Black community including Claudette Colvin, Malcom X, Emmett Till, and Jackie Robinson. For additional key figures, take a look at this list [here](#).

Familiarize yourself with important events in Black history, like Juneteenth, the Tulsa Race Massacre of 1921, and Brown versus the Board of Education. You can also explore a comprehensive list of important events [here](#) and find out about little know black history facts [here](#).

Understand the basics of important topics, including the racial wealth gap, systematic racism, slavery in the United States, tokenism, and [inequality in the justice system](#).

***“I call on all our leaders and communities to stand together against injustice and for the value of human life. This is the time for us to rise and lead from a place of humanity, to tackle the complex issues and uncertainty our nation faces. ”***

- Dennis Kennedy  
Founder & Chairman  
National Diversity Council



Share your knowledge about White privilege proactively with others and speak up whenever faced with anti-Black remarks.

**Understand what White privilege is:**

First, understand what White privilege is. Here is a quick definition from Peggy McIntosh in her paper, *“White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack:”* “White privilege [is] an invisible package of unearned assets that I can count on cashing in each day but about which I was ‘meant’ to remain oblivious.” We recommend reading the entire McIntosh paper to learn more and also do a LOT of research to truly understand what White privilege is and how it shapes our society.

*“Race and racism is a reality that so many of us grow up learning to just deal with. But if we ever hope to move past it, it can’t just be on people of colour to deal with it. It’s up to all of us – Black, white, everyone – no matter how well-meaning we think we might be, to do the honest, uncomfortable work of rooting it out. It starts with self-examination and listening to those whose lives are different from our own. It ends with justice, compassion, and empathy that manifests in our lives and on our streets. ”*

- Michelle Obama  
Former First Lady

**Now you think you understand White privilege. What’s next?:**

Once you have this knowledge, the next step is understanding how to best spread that knowledge. If you are White, you have a large responsibility here to understand your own White privilege and speak to other White people about your privilege, power and racism as a whole. As Robin DiAngelo points out in her book, *“White Fragility,”* often times the [“social costs for a Black person in awakening the sleeping dragon of White fragility often prove so high that many Black people don’t risk pointing out discrimination when they see it. And the expectation of “White solidarity”—White people will forbear from correcting each other’s racial missteps, to preserve the peace—makes genuine allyship elusive.”](#) The luxury of accepting “White solidarity” is yet another mark of White privilege that White allies must acknowledge and combat by speaking up and being actively anti-racist.

**Involve your children:**

If you have children in your life, teach them beyond what most history books and novels will demonstrate. Most of these books will display a passive story about Black history in America - they touch on the Civil War, how we fought against slavery and eventually outlawed segregation. With this



teaching, most children go on to believe that racism is over. Have a real talk with your child about how structural racism continues to exist and what white privilege is. And don't underestimate your young children - Caryn Park, a professor at Anitoch University- tells us that, "[children as young as three years old are aware of race and skin color.](#)" Talk to your child about how you can support the end of racial injustices by voting in black officials to office, calling your local organizations that might have biased policies and acting against them, and by simply listening to and believing the stories Black people.

As a parent, you should also tell your child's school or teacher that you are in support of having candid conversations about race within the classroom. When you make this request, make sure to ask the school to create a safe space for the discussion (one that includes ground rules for respect, safety and inclusion) and to consider the racial composition of the school/classroom (staff and students).

### **Prepare yourself for racism:**

It is incredibly prominent in today's world and can come in so many forms. It will not always be easily recognizable like someone shouting the N word (however, that very well may happen, too)(Look at this helpful diagram for examples of covert racism [here](#))Many people are racist in subtle and discreet ways. Many times, people won't even know that they are acting racist or saying something racist (because we live in a racist society that probably hasn't challenged them in the past). It is your job to prepare yourself for these various forms of racism that you might have to combat. If you are prepared for what might happen then you can also prepare for how you might react

*"White feelings should never be held in higher regard than black lives"*

- Rachel Cargle  
Writer

### **Prepare yourself on *reacting* to racism:**

When you detect racism it can be intimidating to react - what if you say the wrong thing, what if there are negative consequences for speaking out (perhaps losing your job if the racist person is a work superior), what if you're in a group and they gang up against you or against an aspect of your identity? These are all real things that have happened in the past so being prepared is your best bet. Rehearse what you might say, consider finding another ally on the same level of your superior, find ways to diffuse conflict and set limits to the conversation. It is important to read the situation and the relationship with the person you are addressing before responding. These will not always be appropriate responses, but here are some one-liners that can work in several situations:

"I don't tolerate bigotry. Do not make racist jokes or remarks in my presence anymore."

"I always thought of you as someone who is open-minded and supported all people. It hurts me to hear you say bigoted things like that."

"I don't understand that 'joke.' Can you explain to me why that's funny?"

"I'm sorry but what I heard you say is "(racist thing)." Am I hearing that correctly? Is that what you meant?"



## Listen to Black community members with intention and engagement

### Recognize when you are wrong:

Many of us (especially those of us writing this guide!) are strong advocates for anti-racism and allyship. We are working hard to combat the racial inequities we see but that DOES NOT mean that we are always right or acting in the appropriate manner. The biggest thing, and most important thing, is to just speak to people and try to understand their experience. In life, at work, mental health, all of it.

If a Black person tells you that you are being racist or that what you said or did was inappropriate then LISTEN, CHANGE and SHARE the knowledge with others. DO NOT express extreme guilt or show any signs of defensiveness - it is not a Black person's job to comfort you for your mistake. Respond with a heartfelt apology and a promise to change your actions in the future.

### Do not speak *for* Black people.

If you are not Black then you will never truly understand the experience. We are all appalled and horrified by the events going on but it is not time to dwell on how it's making the non-Black community feel - it's a time to amplify the Black experience and provide the Black community with a platform to speak. Leslie Mac, an activist and community organizer reminds us, ["always center the voices and causes of black, indigenous, and people of color, both online and in \[your\] local communities, and amplify their stories and their demands to speak out. It's also important to be cognizant of how detrimental it is when \[you\] lead with how \[you're\] feeling in moments like this. It's an easy thing to get sucked into, because white supremacy culture teaches white people that their feelings are the most important thing."](#)

*"If you are calling for an end to this unrest... but you are not calling for the end to the conditions that created the unrest, you are a hypocrite."*

- Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
United States Representative

## Support Black individuals in organizations so that workplace culture can become increasingly equitable and just

### Address racial injustices with your team:

Talk to your team about White privilege. You can find some ideas about how to broach the subject [here](#). You can also encourage team members to take a [White Privilege](#) or [White Allies Checklist](#)



Check in with your Black colleagues. There isn't one "right" thing to say, since everyone is processing current situations differently. A simple "I know you might be having a difficult time right now - if you need to take a day off, please just let me know" or "I just wanted to check in and see how you're doing"

Have a team discussion about implicit bias and microaggressions, so team members can learn to identify, prevent, and call out these instances if/when they occur. You can also encourage team members to take a test from Harvard's [Project Implicit](#) to identify where their unconscious biases lie.

Don't be silent! If you witness an insensitive comment on a Zoom/virtual call, or if you notice the work of a black colleague is constantly overlooked, speak up!

**Address racial injustices as a company:**

Issue a company statement condemning racism / supporting anti-racism. If you are not in a position where you make those decisions, schedule a meeting with your leadership team to discuss the possibility of having one. For examples of companies leading the way, take a look at examples set by [EA Games](#), [Sony](#), [Lego](#), [Ben & Jerry's](#) and [Target](#), among many others.

*"A riot is the language of the unheard"*

- Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Civil Rights Leader

Ensure your company has diversity and inclusion built into its culture. If you have a diversity statement either internally, or on your website, ensure it includes verbiage on being anti-racist.

If you don't have one, start a Black Employee Resource Group (ERG). If you do have one, utilize them in your decision making around what to do right now.

Look at who your vendors / suppliers are. Make sure you are investing your money with businesses who support diversity, equity, and inclusion and who actively condemn racism, discrimination and hatred.

Support Black businesses and small businesses.

Hire, promote, and support Black professionals. Are you doing all you can as a company to ensure Black voices are included in, and are being heard in your company?

**Acknowledge your own privilege and power and utilize it to deconstruct oppression and hold my community accountable.**

**Speak to Black people and try to understand their experience.**

Listen more and talk less. Empathize with their own experiences of racism. Read books authored by Black individuals so that you are knowledgeable enough to avoid situations where you could be potentially contributing to the problem. [Here](#) is a thread of great books to read.



### **Call out overt & covert racist behavior and comments.**

In addition to microaggressions, racial & privilege gaslighting are also subtle biased statements that can come off negatively. Gaslighting is when someone manipulates someone else by psychological means into questioning their own sanity. Some examples of racial and privilege gaslighting are below:

- "Racism doesn't exist anymore"
- "If you protest/said it peacefully, more people would listen to you"
- "I don't think they were being racist, but..."
- "It was a joke, calm down"
- "What I said and did is not racist"
- "Why is it always about race?"

It's very important, as allies, to never rebuttal someone's lived experience.

### **Be intentional about including diversity in your home.**

For example, find books that feature characters of color as the protagonist, such as the ones linked [here](#) and even some of the below:

- [I Am Enough. Author: Grace Byers](#)
- [This is How We Do It: One Day in The Lives of Seven Kids from Around the World. Author: Matt Lamothe](#)
- [Teach Your Dragon About Diversity. Author: Steve Herman](#)
- [One Love. Author: Cedella Marley. Illustrator: Vanessa Brantley-Newton](#)

And many others. Once you are done with any book, consider donating it to a classroom that could benefit from that book.

### **Demand more of your elected officials.**

In some areas across the nation, money is being used to fund the police that is being used in turn to harass and murder black and brown people. [Here](#) is a great article for you to review which discusses. Know more about what your elected officials are doing to protect members of the Black community. Visit this [website](#) to identify your local elected officials.

### **Put your activism, money, and demand for justice, where your mouth is.**

If you can and are financially able to, donate to organizations that are actively fighting against racial injustice. *\*\*not change.org.*

- A list of *reputable* places to donate can be found [here](#).
- If you cannot donate, there are other ways you can help:
- Signing petitions linked [here](#)
- Text or call officials linked [here](#)
- Email a representative - template linked [here](#)
- Participate in protests - but understand your role there. Follow your local cities social media like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram for updates.



## Additional Resources

### Articles/Essays:

- [A House Still Divided](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- [The Case for Reparations](#) by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- [Responding to Everyday Bigotry](#) by the Southern Poverty Law Center
- [White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack](#) by Peggy McIntosh
- [Doing the Work: Unearthing Our Own White Privilege](#) by Maggie Potapchuk

### Books:

- [Between the World and Me](#) by Ta-Nehisi Coates
- [How to Be an Antiracist](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- [Raising White Kids: Bringing Up Children in a Racially Unjust America](#) by Jennifer Harvey.
- [Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America](#) by Ibram X. Kendi
- [The Condemnation of Blackness: Race Crime, and the Making of Modern Urban America](#) by Khalil Gibran Muhammed
- [The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness](#) by Michelle Alexander
- [White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism](#) by Robin Diangelo
- [Why I'm No Longer Talking to White People About Race](#) - Reni Eddo-Lodge

### Film/TV:

- [When They See Us](#) – documentary by Ava Duverney, and companion learning guide [Array101](#).
- [‘Stamped’ and the Story of Racism in the United States](#) – Interview of Jason Reynolds and Ibram X. Kendi sharing how their book “Stamped” aims to illuminate racism in America in an unconventional and stimulating way. Clip from the Daily Show with Trevor Noah.
- [The House I Live In](#) – Film from PBS that examines the human rights implications of America’s war on drugs.

### Guides:

- [Whiteness and White Privilege](#) by Racial Equity Tools
- [Let’s Talk! Discussing Race, Racism, and Other Difficult Topics with Students](#) by Teaching Tolerance.
- [Talking about Race](#) by the National Museum of African American History & Culture - “designed to help individuals, families and communities talk about racism, racial identity and the way these forces shape every aspect of society.” The portal includes online exercises, scholarly articles and more than 100 multimedia resources for individuals who are committed to racial equality.
  - [How to talk to students about race](#)
  - [How to talk to kids about race](#)

### Podcasts:

- [Code Switch](#) by NPR, which discusses how race affects every aspect of our society
- [1619](#) by the New York Times, which discusses the history of slavery in America

