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Orchard Park High PSHE



Racism and Recognising it
Written by OPHS Equality Club



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Understanding Racism

Do now:

Rate your level of understanding from 1(no understanding) to 10 (a deep understanding)

1. I understand what racism is and isn't
2. I understand how racism is expressed
3. I understand how racism can affect people
4. I understand how an environment influences racial opinions
5. I understand how to prevent racism

Vocabulary:

- **Ethnicity:** belonging to a group made up of people based on cultural characteristics like common cultural background or descent, language, heritage or customs.
- **Nationality:** belonging to a particular nation based on legal binding to that country because you are born there.
- **Race:** a social construct grouping people based on their unchangeable, physical characteristics.
- **Microaggressions:** A statement, action, or incident regarded as indirect, subtle, or unintentional discrimination against members of a specific group such as a racial or ethnic minority.
- **Stereotype:** A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.
- **Prejudice:** A preconceived opinion that is not based on reason or actual experience.
- **Discrimination:** The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people
- **Condone:** To regard or treat (something bad or blameworthy) as acceptable, forgivable, or harmless.

What is Racism?

Racism is prejudice, discrimination by an **individual or institution** against a specific race. Everyone is capable of racism and anyone can receive racism. Racism under any circumstance is not okay. We can unconsciously have predetermined opinions (prejudice) about certain racial groups. This can be a result of stereotypes, the environment that you're exposed to and the opinions of the people you are surrounded by.

Racism is when someone is seen or treated as inferior or superior based on their:

- 1. Skin colour (sometimes known as race)
- 2. Religion
- 3. Nationality
- 4. Culture

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Often this is known as **ethnicity** – which can be a combination of any of these.

You might have heard about racism. You may have experienced racism yourself, witnessed it happening to someone else or even been involved in it. Sadly, racism is happening all of the time all over the world to millions of people and causes a great deal of pain and hurt.

Humans are not born with racist ideas...we learn them. This means that with a bit of time and effort we can take steps to prevent learning these views or unlearn them if they are already present.

Think and then turn and talk

1. **How might someone treat someone if they were going to be racist towards them?**

Racism is: (types of treatment involved in racism e.g. Name calling)

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2. **What characteristics or traits might someone pick on if they were going to be racist towards another?**

Characteristics and traits picked on during racist events

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Racism has 3 parts: personal, institutional and structural.

Personal: is when an individual behaves in racist ways towards another person.

An example of this is:

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Institutional: is when an organisation such as a school or workplace behaves in racist ways towards individuals or groups of people

An example of this is:

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Structural: is when personal and institutional racism come together to embed advantage and disadvantage at all levels of society.

An example of this is:

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True or False?

- Picking on someone because of the colour of their hair is racism?
- Is it ok to say something about someone's skin colour if it is just a joke?
- Racism is in the past and doesn't happen much anymore?
- If you see someone being racist it is best to ignore it?
- Anyone can help end racism?

How can we identify what is and what isn't racism?

Scenario	Racism?	If it isn't racism, what is it an example of? Give a reason why.
Example: 'I've got lots of black friends so I can't be racist'		<i>It isn't racist to say that you aren't racist because you have friends from other races but you can't use that as an excuse to make racist comments or display microaggressions</i>
1. A child says to another 'I don't even see you as Jewish...'		
2. A black child calls another black child 'Burnt toast'		
3. Staff at a holiday company were told to decline or cancel bookings made under specific names that appeared to be		

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surnames of Travellers or by people with Irish accents.		
4. A child says to a child who has recently moved to the UK from China 'You must be good at maths'		
5.		
6.		



STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT THE N-WORD

Sean Price's interview with **Arizona State University Professor Neal A. Lester**. Lester has twice taught courses on the n-word—and found there's plenty to talk about.

The n-word is unique in the English language. On one hand, it is the ultimate insult—a word that has tormented generations of African Americans. Yet over time, it has become a popular term of endearment by the descendants of the very people who once had to endure it. Among many young people today—Black and white—the n-word can mean friend. Neal A. Lester, dean of humanities and former chair of the English department at Arizona State University, recognized that the complexity of the n-word's evolution demanded greater critical attention. In 2008, he taught the first ever college-level class designed to explore the n-word.

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Lester said the subject fascinated him precisely because he didn't understand its layered complexities.

"When I first started talking about the idea of the course," Lester recalled, "I had people saying, 'This is really exciting, but what would you do in the course? How can you have a course about a word?' It was clear to me that the course, both in its conception and in how it unfolded, was much bigger than a word. It starts with a word, but it becomes about other ideas and realities that go beyond words.

How did the n-word become such a scathing insult?

We know, at least in the history I've looked at, that the word started off as just a descriptor, "negro," with no value attached to it. ... We know that as early as the 17th century, "negro" evolved to the n word as intentionally derogatory, and it has never been able to shed that baggage since then—even when Black people talk about appropriating and reappropriating (to reclaim the word and change the meaning). The poison is still there. **The word is inextricably linked with violence and brutality on Black psyches and derogatory aspersions cast on Black bodies. No degree of appropriating can rid it of that bloodsoaked history.**

Why is the n-word so popular with many young Black kids today?

If you could keep the word within the context of the intimate environment [among friends], then I can see that you could potentially own the word and control it. **But you can't because the word takes on a life of its own if it's not in that environment.** People like to talk about it in terms of public and private uses. Jesse Jackson was one of those who called for a moratorium (temporary suspension) on using the word, but then was caught using the word with a live mic during a "private" whispered conversation.

There's no way to know all of its nuances because it's such a complicated word, a word with a particular racialized American history. But one way of getting at it is to have some critical and historical discussions about it and not pretend that it doesn't exist. We also cannot pretend that there is not a double standard—that Black people can say it without much social consequence but white people cannot. There's a double standard about a lot of stuff. There are certain things that I would never say. In my relationship with my wife, who is not African American, I would never imagine her using that word, no matter how angry she was with me.

That's what I'm asking people to do—to **self-reflect critically** on how we all use language and the extent to which language is a reflection of our innermost thoughts. Most people don't bother to go to that level of self-reflection and self-critique. Ultimately, that's what the class is about. It's about self-education and self-critique, not trying to control others by telling them what to say or how to think, but rather trying to figure out how we think and how the words we use mirror our thinking.

What types of things are discussed on the course?

In their circles of white friends, some are so comfortable with the n-word because they've grown up on and been nourished by hip-hop. Much of the commercial hip-hop culture by Black males uses the n-word as a staple. White youths, statistically the largest consumers of hip-hop, then feel that they can use the word among themselves with Black and white peers. ... But then I hear in that same discussion that many of the Black youths are indeed offended

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by [whites using the n-word]. And if Blacks and whites are together and a white person uses the word, many Blacks are ready to fight. So this word comes laden with these complicated and contradictory emotional responses to it. It's very confusing to folks on the "outside," particularly when nobody has really talked about the history of the word in terms of American history, language, performance and identity.

End of interview.

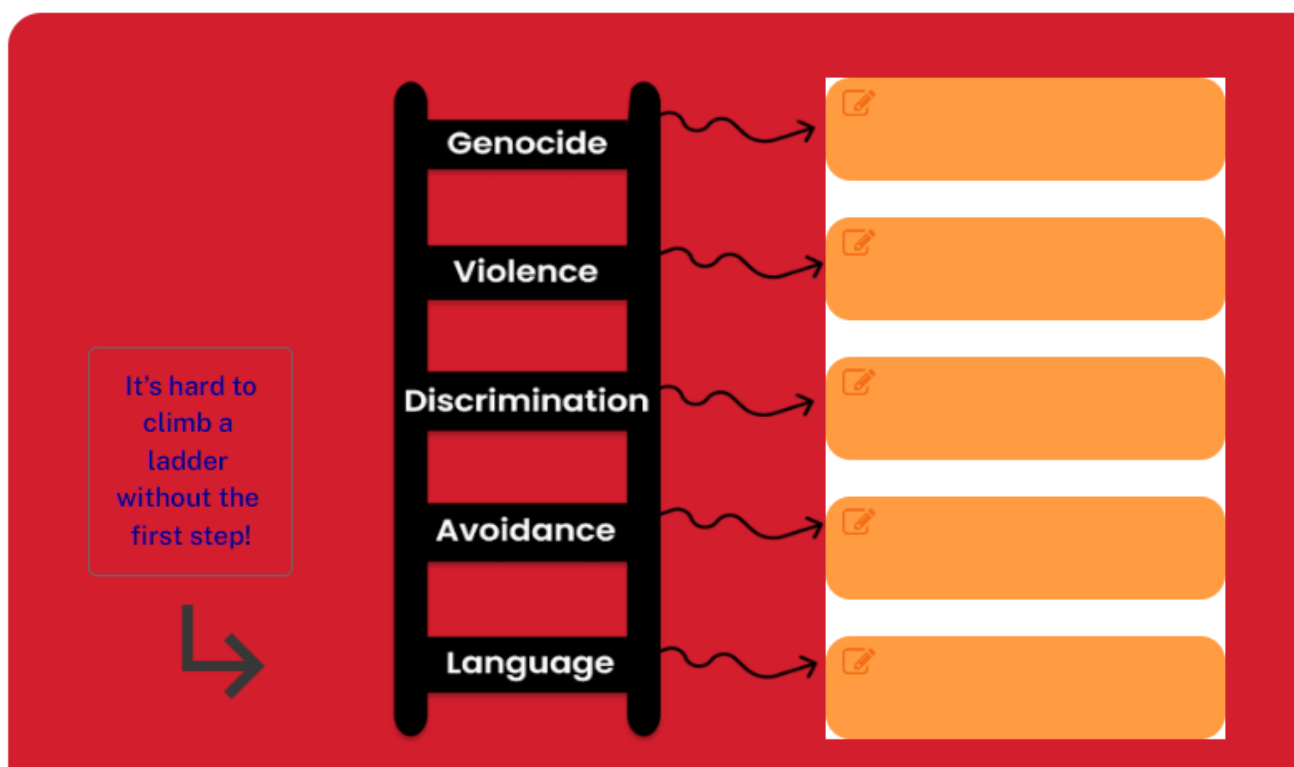
What does this mean for our Orchard Park High community?

It is clear that the n word is steeped in a significantly derogatory and brutal history and that its use can offend and bring harm to others. We understand that there is complexity involved in the use of the word and so **we do not condone its use in school** because we can not guarantee that it is being used with an appropriate understanding of the historical context of the word and is open to misinterpretation.

We are aware that children at this school have been known to offer other students a 'free pass' to say the n word and this is again something that **we do not condone** because it risks affecting relationships in our community and the safety and happiness of others in our community.

The Ladder of Racism

What examples of behaviours could you add to the different layers of the ladder?



- What factors cause hate and prejudice to escalate? Is the escalation clear?
- Can you recognise any of your own behaviour on the ladder?
- Could any of the sections of the ladder happen in isolation?
- How could individuals stop the escalation?
- How could communities stop the escalation?
- Where on the ladder could you challenge behaviours? What action would you take?

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"Don't ignore it by thinking this is the other guy and I cannot be involved, I would say, you have to be involved because if not, God forbid, the same thing can happen again, no matter how wonderful a country is, you only need a couple of people that start spreading rumours and the whole darn thing can come tumbling down worse than an earthquake."

Mollie Stanber, Holocaust survivor

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has."

Margaret Mead, American Anthropologist

Who can I turn to for help?

<i>Role</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>What might I go to them for help with?</i>

You should report all instances of racism to your head of year, a trusted teacher or through the report bullying tab on the school's website. All instances of racism are investigated and reported to the Headteacher who determines the appropriate course of action.

Our Equality Pledge

At Orchard Park High we believe in equality, we value the strength that comes with difference and we celebrate the positive contribution that diversity brings to our community. Our community has a voice that strives to bring about positive change through our Equality Pledge:

- We agree everyone has the right to feel safe.
- We understand that all people should be treated with dignity and respect.
- We will eliminate prejudice and discrimination from our own words and actions.
- We will not tolerate offensive language and behaviour.
- We celebrate our differences.
- We will call out and challenge inequality in our community.
- We will not be bystanders.
- We stand for inclusion.
- We seek to understand, challenge and overcome our own biases.
- We support our community to reflect on and learn from our mistakes.

"Hitler's plan was so successful not because so many people were desperate to join his army and kill people, his plan was successful because so many people did nothing." Ruth Barnet, Holocaust survivor. At Orchard Park, we understand that inequality thrives in the company of silence; we pledge that we will not stay quiet.