

Chapter 5

What is Racism? (Institutional)

“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 Color 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.” - Michelle Obama

Reflecting on Power

1. Explore Power: What is power? What does it look like, smell like, feel like, sound like, and taste like?

Who Holds Power?

Notice who has power. Notice their race and whether they are a part of the dominant culture.

2. Who is the head of your school?

3. Who runs the biggest corporations? Name a few and Google who runs them.

4. Who are your teachers today? Who have been your teachers since kindergarten?

5. Who is the superintendent of your school district?

6. Who is the mayor of your city?

7. Who is the governor of your state?

8. Who is the president of this country?

9. Who are the celebrities you see often? Who is in the shows, news and movies you watch?

10. Who are the authors you read at school? Who are the authors you choose to read?

Examples of Institutional Power

Government	Banks
Media & Entertainment	Criminal Justice System
Business	Education
Housing	Health Care

11. From the list above of examples of institutional power, what power do these institutions hold? Who runs these institutions? How do they/could they misuse and abuse power? How could they use their power for racial justice? (Specifically, what power regarding race and racism do these institutions hold? For example: Banks give loans to people so they can buy homes.)

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12. Which institutions have a direct impact on you?

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13. How can institutions misuse and abuse their power? (For example: In media and entertainment, adhering to European beauty standards, we typically see people who are white, tall, cisgender, fit/thin, well groomed, etc., as being the normal everyday person.)

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