

Letters for Black Lives Follow-up Conversations Guide

LettersforBlackLives.com

Hello new contributors!

This is a Talking Point guide for additional follow-up conversations with your friends and family about anti-Blackness.

This is a living document with all our notes. The final version is [here](#).

This document is a supplement to the [2020 Letters for Black Lives](#), which is meant to start a conversation on anti-Blackness in our communities. There are a lot of complex issues around anti-Black racism and protests that we didn't have space to address in the main letter so this resource is for people to continue those conversations with their family and respond to the questions or concerns they might bring up.

Please remember that the audience for these talking points and arguments is the same as for the letter. Try to use language that will resonate with members of your family or community who are not yet familiar with this discourse.

Conversations about this document are happening in the [#writing-feedback](#) and [#conversation-strategies](#) channels in [Slack](#)

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Having hard conversations

Conversations—especially **hard** conversations—are not competitions.

This seems like an obvious point to make but when emotions get high, we start treating conversations as a confrontational battle—with winners and losers—when we ought to be treating them as an energetic dance where we step back and forth, respectful of each other's boundaries.

These sorts of shared conversations take time. While it takes all partners working together to create a shared understanding, it only takes one person out of sync to create confusion and misunderstanding. What can help is to approach this not as an adversarial interaction where you have to prove them wrong, but as an exercise to build a shared understanding.

Building empathy with active listening

Oftentimes, when we engage in conversations with our families, we try to take control of the conversation. In an effort to convince them of our position, we speak out instead of listening.

Active listening is a method for engaging more deeply in a conversation. By actively listening, we not only intentionally give our conversation partner(s) the space to express themselves, but better understand and remember what they are saying. Holding space for others to speak, even if you think they are wrong, creates trust. It also allows us to build empathy for the speaker.

Empathy is the basis for effective communication. It tells us about the mindset and needs of others, so that we can adapt our conversation strategies to be more effective. Empathy tells us when it's time to push ahead, try a different approach, or simply back off and try again later. By skillfully employing active listening, you can deepen your connections with family, which could make it easier to come back to a conversation if it didn't succeed the first time.

Here are two techniques you can try:

Listening, Looping, and Dipping

Asian parents are gonna love this: this technique was created by a monk to train *lawyers*.

- **Listening**—Just listen mindfully, don't respond verbally beyond "I see" or "Go on."
- **Looping**—At the end of every thought, repeat back what you think you heard. "So what I think I heard you say was..." Don't worry if the speaker corrects you—it's not a test. The point is to get a second chance to clarify and understand.
- **Dipping**—Often when listening, we'll get distracted by to-do lists, lunch plans, or other random thoughts. Check in with yourself continuously, note when you get distracted, and gently set it aside.

LARA method

This technique was developed by marriage equality activist Bonnie Tinker as part of a toolkit for nonviolent dialogue.

- **Listen**—Like in the method above, just listen mindfully. For example, your family member might say “I don’t understand why you’re standing up for Black people, when it’s your parents who worked so hard to get you your life today.”
- **Affirm**—Name something that was said and validate it. Try to find common ground, e.g. “I know it feels unfair. You have struggled a lot to raise me when you came here.”
- **Respond**—This is your moment to share your view, but do so succinctly and calmly. For example, “You are very important to me, but so are my friends, many of whom are black. I want them to feel safe just like how you want me to feel safe”
- **Ask**—Give the proverbial mic back to the other person by asking them a question. This shows you are truly interested in exchanging perspectives, not just trying to win an argument. You might say, “Are you friends with any Black people at work or in the neighborhood?”

Both of these methods are specifically to improve how we listen and understand the meaning behind what people are saying **before** we respond and try to convince them.

Checking in with yourself

Hard conversations require a lot of emotional energy. Before you start a conversation, check in with yourself—are you tired? Are you already in a bad mood? Have you had a long day? When is the last time you ate? Take a few minutes to check in with yourself to make sure you have the concentration to hold space for others who you disagree with.

As you are talking, do you feel yourself getting riled up? If you are prone to responding quickly, give yourself a breath before responding. If you find yourself running out of patience, it is entirely okay to pause to regroup and collect yourself.

Recentering the conversation

If your family starts centering themselves in the argument by saying, “Well, I had a hard life, too...” or “I have Black friends,” acknowledge their feelings of discomfort, remind them that we are not personally attacking them, and go back to the main topics (e.g. systemic racism, police brutality).

Building a shared understanding of the world

Building a shared understanding of the world is the foundation for everything. In many ways we are redefining justice and building a new world. Without a shared set of facts that everyone agrees on, you might use the same words and same vocabulary but end up constantly talking across each other—like two ships passing in the night.

The first is to recognize that you may start from different worlds. There are gaps in your and your family's experiences of the world—and all those experiences are valid and need to be acknowledged. This is why it is so important to guide the conversation in a way that allows you to understand one another's worldviews, so you can establish a baseline of shared facts to build from.

Then you can try to find similarities between your worlds. What, in today's world, resonates with them?

- An example from the Slack community: “When talking to my mother, she said that we had to fight police brutality to get our independence from the British, and that she sees the same thing going on right now. They might be using batons instead of bamboo sticks but it's fundamentally the same struggle against white supremacy/state violence”
- [@jirafarheem](#) on Instagram, [posting on behalf of Isabel at an AAPI for BLM protest](#).

Meeting people where they are

Try not to make snap judgements when someone does not know, or is unfamiliar with something. There are a lot of reasons for people to be not as informed as you are. This is not a moral failing—staying informed when you are busy trying to get through the day is hard. Trying to do it when the systems that empower white supremacy are actively spreading disinformation to keep people ignorant is even harder.

Hard conversations also take time, a lot of it. Convincing someone of anything takes more than giving them a pile of facts—especially when the topic is emotionally charged and we are trying to change their view of the world.

Remember to give people space—we are less receptive when we feel trapped or ganged up on. We do not understand one another as clearly when we are wound up, tired, stressed, or angry. While things can feel urgent, you need to be sensitive to whether someone is receptive to an emotionally charged conversation.

Making space for different types of conversations

Communicate using a medium or method that is genuine to you and that can allow your conversation partner(s) to be comfortable and more receptive. If that means sitting around the table because that's how your family catches up and gossips, do that. If you or your family is comfortable over video chat, use that. Perhaps they prefer watching documentaries or films, or

reading articles. We all learn and process in different ways; help your loved ones learn and process using the media most comfortable for them.

One community member shares that, “My mom won’t listen to anything I say... but she loves movies. So I just keep putting on movies and shows that tell stories about the realities of Black people, haha. Her eyes are glued.”

Don’t just bombard them with information—facts can support a position, but they are not enough alone. The emotional and moral strength of what you are saying matters just as much if not more than the rational—you need to say things with your heart. Use the words and idioms that only your community and your family use. You are creating a shared vocabulary and understanding. That takes time.

You don’t have to go it alone

You don’t have to figure out how to have this conversation without support.

White supremacy and imperialism came about because of a team effort. They’ve had centuries to infect our cultures and our languages. Unlearning white supremacy culture needs to be a team effort too. This work is hard and exhausting; you will need relief. Find a community that understands the dynamic you have with your parents, whether it’s a therapist, siblings, cousins, or friends that share a cultural background. Learn to speak the language of anti-racism and decolonization with them until it feels like second nature. Then you can approach others from a place of strength.

There are also many online resources and forums that help tackle this subject. You can also join the #conversation-strategies channel in the [Letters for Black Lives Slack](#), a place to find help and encouragement for these tough conversations.

Don’t expect immediate understanding. These conversations take time.

When tensions and emotions are high, it is easy to feel like you are locked in battle. But if the conversation goes down that path, everybody loses.

The truth is, you won’t finish this conversation in one sitting, and it’s okay to fail and step away. You will need to stop, catch your breath, and regroup. Some conversations will go better than others, and you will make plenty of mistakes. The important part is that you try again next time.

Though progress can feel slow, know that every time you talk, you will learn from each other and understand each other a little better. Breakthroughs can come at the most unexpected moments—like when you're making dinner or watching TV—so be okay with pacing yourself.

Remind yourselves that you care for each other.

It can be hard to remember that you love one another if you are constantly fighting. Not every conversation has to be about white supremacy and imperialism. Sharing joy today will help you have hard conversations tomorrow.

Remind the person that you care for them and love them. Even when you are angry, that anger comes from a place of love—if you didn't care, you wouldn't be trying. Tell them about how meaningful it is for you to have these conversations and that you appreciate their listening even if it can be hard at times.

Additional Resources

- @jacklamli on Instagram: [How to Talk to People Who Disagree](#)
- @schwarkattack on Instagram: [How to Talk to Your White Family about Racial Injustice](#)
- @liana.teresa on Instagram: [How to Refocus the Conversation on What's Important](#)
- @taiwaneseam_org on Instagram: [How to Refocus the Conversation on What's Important \(Traditional Chinese Translation\)](#)
- @chefjennydorsey on Instagram: [Prompt Uncomfortable Conversations](#)
- @the.love.therapist on Instagram: [How to Survive the Power Struggle Stage](#)
- @the.love.therapist on Instagram: [How to Have Difficult Conversations](#)
- @the.love.therapist on Instagram: [Healthy Listening](#)
- @robynical on Instagram: [A Conversation Starter Pack for Asians New to Talking about Racism with Asian Friends & Family](#)
- @officialmaemag on Instagram: [It's time we had a conversation about Anti-Blackness in the APIDA community](#)
- @feministsexed on Instagram: [How to Rest & Recover While You Fight for Social Change](#)

Recent cases

This section covers the facts surrounding the latest, most high-profile instances of police brutality that killed Black men and women.

What happened to Ahmaud Arbery?

Ahmaud Arbery was a 25-year-old Black man from Georgia. On February 23, 2020 Ahmaud was on a typical run in his neighborhood. His white neighbors — one who is a former police

officer — found him suspicious because of the color of his skin. They chased, attacked, and killed him as he tried to run away. Despite video proof of this murder, the men were not charged until two months later, and only after public outrage.

The Action Pac: [Justice for Ahmaud Arbery](#)

Vox: [The Killing of Ahmaud Arbery](#)

What happened to Breonna Taylor?

Breonna Taylor was a 26-year-old Black woman and emergency room technician who was killed by police officers in Kentucky in the middle of the night. No drugs were found in the couple's apartment, and the main suspects were already in custody when Breonna's home was raided.

On March 13, 2020, Breonna and her boyfriend were asleep when three plainclothes police officers entered their home, using a battering ram to force open the door. Breonna's boyfriend said the police did not identify themselves, despite the couple asking, "Who is it?" several times, and they thought they were being attacked by criminals. He then armed himself and shot a police officer in the leg. The officers responded by firing more than 20 rounds in the living room, dining room, kitchen, hallway, bathroom and both bedrooms. Breonna was shot at least eight times and died at the scene.

Police had a "no-knock" warrant, which does not require officers to announce themselves when entering. These warrants are commonly used in the War on Drugs, and have led to many innocent victims being injured or killed. The warrant must say why the police have reasonable suspicion that knocking-and-announcing would cause that specific individual to destroy evidence or attack/flee the police. This warrant, though signed by a judge, was [illegal and unconstitutional](#) because it was not specific to Breonna. Many are similarly unconstitutional.

None of the officers have been arrested, yet Breonna's boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, a licensed gun owner, was arrested and charged for attempted murder of a police officer.

The Action Pac: [Stand with Bre](#)

Vox: [The Police Shooting of Breonna Taylor](#)

What happened to George Floyd?

George Floyd was a 46-year-old Black man from Minneapolis, Minnesota. He was brutally killed by police on May 25, 2020.

A white police officer, Derek Chauvin, knelt on Floyd's neck, while George cried out, "Please, I can't breathe" and "Mama." After 6 minutes, Floyd became unresponsive with no pulse, but

Chavin continued to kneel on his neck for another 3 minutes—for a total of 8 minutes and 46 seconds. Two other police officers, Thomas Lane & Alexander Kueng, assisted in keeping Floyd on the ground while one Asian police officer, Tou Thao, stood by.

Floyd died at the scene from lack of oxygen.

New York Times: [How George Floyd was Killed](#)

Vox: [The Fatal Arrest of George Floyd](#)

What happened to Tony McDade?

Tony McDade was a 38-year-old Black transgender man. On May 27, 2020, Tony was shot and killed by a white police officer in Tallahassee, Florida. As of June 7, 2020, the name of the officer involved has not been released. Tallahassee police claimed that McDade was a suspect in a fatal stabbing that occurred shortly before his death, was armed with a handgun, and “made a move consistent with using the firearm against the officer.” However, an eyewitness told local media that police never tried to deescalate the situation. The eyewitness reported that “[he] never heard ‘Get down, freeze, I’m an officer’—nothing. [He] just heard gunshots.” After a public push to see body cam footage and to have the officer’s name released, the city of Tallahassee will release the name of the officer who killed Tony during the week of June 8, 2020.

Mother Jones: [The Police Killing You Probably Didn’t Hear About This Week](#)

ABC 27 WTXL Tallahassee: [City of Tallahassee to release public records in Tony McDade shooting](#)

Responding to basic questions

This section begins to address some common questions you might encounter while in conversation with your families.

Why are people so angry about this one death?

Like the story of the straw that broke the camel's back, there comes a point when the addition of one more death to the burden of all the deaths that came before becomes too much to bear. Floyd's death has become a symbol of the dozens of extrajudicial killings of Black people, and the many other injustices they face in this country.

It also shows that even when there is evidence, there is often not justice. Floyd's death was captured on camera — and the police officers were still not charged until days later. Since then, there has also been video proof of further police brutality in protests across the country. Police have been caught on camera using tear gas and pepper spray, shooting rubber bullets, and even driving into crowds of protestors.

Why are you getting involved in this? It isn't safe.

I want to reiterate that I care and need to be involved because our fate in society is intertwined with those of Black people. We face a common enemy: white supremacy. If we don't dismantle these structures now, it impacts our lives too. It isn't safe *not* to be involved.

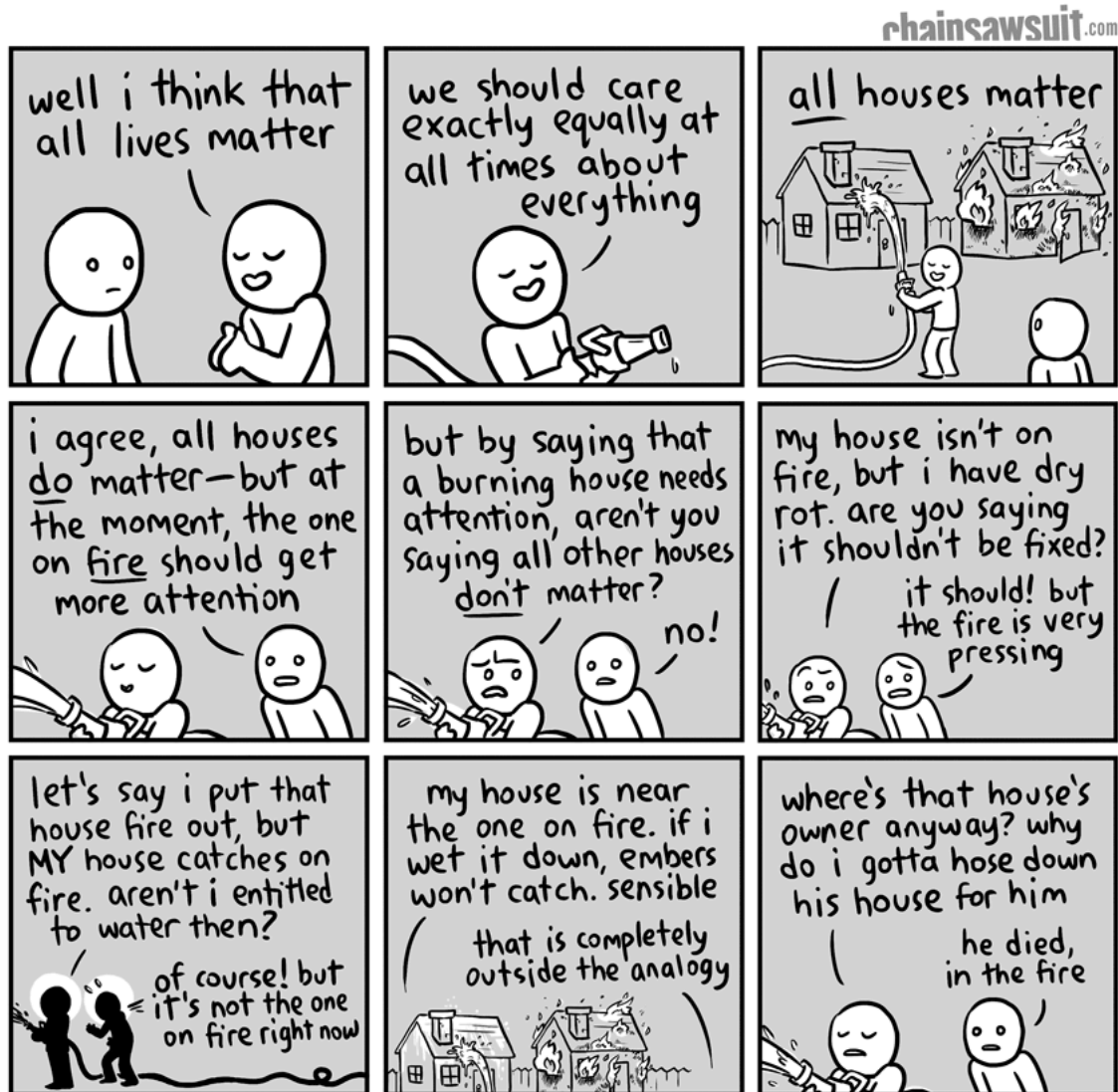
I recognize that your experience of history may have taught you that speaking out and protesting might be dangerous and lead to retribution, but there are many safe ways to be involved in the U.S. today, including donating to Black-led organizations, calling elected officials from home, and speaking up in everyday situations when we encounter a Black colleague or friend facing discrimination or injustice. I encourage you to think about how you can do this too.

Know that we in the younger generation have the knowledge to protect ourselves. We are responsible and aware of the complexity of reality as well as our limits. We have tools and networks of support to connect and inform us—our friends and colleagues are journalists, lawyers, historians, and writers. I know you are afraid of the chaos now, but trust that we understand the risks and how to do this work safely. We will always take care of ourselves, but that doesn't mean we can't also take care of others in society.

Why can't I say All Lives Matter?

Yes, all lives *should* matter, but not all lives are being treated the same way. Black lives, specifically, are often assaulted or wrongfully killed just because of the color of their skin. Also, black people disproportionately experience social and health inequities merely due to the color of their skin.

Example: Imagine your house is on fire. You ask for your neighbor's help to stop the fire, but they respond with, "All houses matter," and continue to ignore your burning house.



Source: chainsawsuit by Kris Straub

Emphasizing one racial group does not mean that we are ignoring all other groups. It means that right now, Black lives aren't valued like everyone else's. That's what we are protesting.

[Responding to "All Lives Matter" in 9 Different Ways](#)

Why can't I say Blue Lives Matter?

"Blue Lives" don't really exist. Being a police officer is an occupation, and a uniform can be taken off and hung up at the end of the day. Being Black is an identity that lasts a whole lifetime. To say Blue Lives Matter, especially right now, says that someone's job matters more than actual lives.

If you don't do anything wrong, you won't get in trouble with the police.

What did Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, or George Floyd do wrong?

Here are some examples of how simply being black increases your chances of being violently targeted by the police:

- [New York Times](#): Minneapolis police use force against Black people at 7 times the rate of whites.
- [Mapping Police Violence](#): Last year, police killed 1,099 people. Black people were 24% of those killed, despite being only 13% of the population. Levels of violent crime in U.S cities do not determine rates of police violence. Police killed more than 7,500 people from 2013-2019, but were only convicted for 25 of those deaths.
- [Deaths Due to Use of Lethal Force by Law Enforcement](#) are disproportionately Black, even though Black victims are less likely to have weapons than white victims.
- Police are much [more likely to stop Black drivers](#) and search their cars, even though black drivers are less likely to have illegal materials.
- Police will consider Black people suspicious with much [less evidence](#) than they need for whites. Even though traffic stops don't seem as important, these biases carry over into other types of police activity, and the more interactions Black people have with the police, the higher their chances of being killed.

We get discriminated against, too!

You're right. We do get discriminated against.

The discrimination that we experience is unfair, unjust, and unacceptable. However, we are capable of wanting to advocate for justice for all people. Black Lives Matter is not meant to take away from our experiences, but to add more to the conversation.

We experience white supremacy and imperialism in different ways than Black people do, but we face the same enemy. The force that destabilized or colonized our homelands is the same force

that enslaved Black people, created a society built on the backs of Black people, and now brutalizes their communities.

It's important to recognize that there are things we do not have to experience because of our race. Black children are often given lessons about how to handle racial/anti-black violence from police. As non-Black people, we are privileged that we don't have to have these discussions with our children. ([How 'The Talk' Unfolds in Black Families Across America \[6 minutes\]](#))

White supremacy inherently considers anyone who is not white to be inferior, and convinces us to step on each other in order to get just a little closer to whiteness, though we will never reach it. Our communities have been grouped with Black people when it is convenient for white people to exclude us, and held above Black people (though not at the level of white people) when it is convenient for them to divide us. The solution to this is not to try and distance ourselves from Black people, who bear the deadliest aspects of this discrimination, but to stand with them and demand that the system change.

Example of how white supremacy has pitted Asian Americans against Black people:

- The LA Riots and Korean Americans:
- There is so much misinformation around the causes of the LA Riots in 1992
 - Korean Americans were not trying to exploit Black people
 - They were not against Black-owned businesses
 - Black people were not against Asians in the US
- During the 1992 riots, the Los Angeles Police Department worked to protect white people in Westwood and Beverly Hills, by [funneling the riots into Koreatown](#) on purpose and refusing to help them.
- Part of the LA riots / Korean Americans were triggered by the [killing of Latasha Harlins](#) by Korean store owner Soon Ja Du, who shot the 15 year old Latasha in the back of the head.

Why should we care about this when this isn't our problem / there are bigger issues in our homelands?

- Imperialism and white supremacy are global and the fight against them are fundamentally linked, so our fight against them must be as well.
- Black activists have always built solidarity and collaborated with activists around the world, and the Movement for Black Lives and their methods have inspired movements and activists around the world including throughout Asia.
 - [Lebanese activists share tips with protesters in America](#)
 - [Colorlines Video](#): Black Lives Matter Delegation Visits Palestine

- In the words of an [anonymous Chinese activist](#): Use your freedom to fight for our freedom. (你們用你們的自由幫助我們爭取自由。)
- In some cases, the issues faced in our countries of heritage are due to similar causes as those harming Black folks in the USA.
 - U.S. military abroad and domestic police share equipment and training
 - Large corporations and U.S. government institutions have extracted natural resources and environmentally devastated Black and other POC communities across the world.
- Anti-Blackness and colorism exist in our home countries as well. Hate has no place anywhere.

Addressing criticism of protests

But what about COVID-19?

Yes, protesting in the streets is riskier than staying at home, but the continuation of systemic and institutionalized racism is also a public health crisis that needs to be addressed.

Did you know that Black people in America have been one of the hardest impacted communities during the coronavirus pandemic? Here are some truths:

- Black people are [less likely to have access to a coronavirus testing center](#).
- Black people are less likely to have health insurance.
 - CDC: In 2018, [12.1% of Black people under 65 did not have health insurance](#).
- Black people are also more likely to [work in the service industry, be essential workers](#), and have to go to work during the pandemic
- Black people are more likely to [need to go to work to](#) provide for their families.
- Black people are [more likely to live in a food desert](#) and be at increased risk of exposure to COVID-19 by having to travel farther distances to buy groceries.
- Due to America's long history of racism, Black people have less [access to quality health care](#) and are at increased risk of developing chronic diseases.
- Black people are dying from coronavirus at [twice the rate of other communities](#), partially due to the government's poor coronavirus response and compounded by decades of [institutionalized, personally mediated, and internalized racism](#).

FACTS ON DISPARITIES IN HEALTHCARE

- The Tuskegee Experiment was a US gov-backed clinical study that withheld adequate treatment from a group of poor black men who had syphilis.
- 40% of healthcare quality measures from the Agency of Healthcare Research and Quality report are worse for black people.
- Black men with chest pain wait longer for an initial EKG than white men.
- Black women are 2-6x more likely to die from complications of pregnancy than white women
- Black people and Mexican Americans aged 35-44 years experience untreated tooth decay nearly twice as much as non-Hispanic whites.

FACTS ON DISPARITIES^{2/10} IN HEALTHCARE

- Black infant mortality rate is 2.5x that of their white counterparts
- Doctors are less likely to prescribe pain medication and appropriate treatment to black patients vs white
- Black men are 50% more likely to get prostate cancer than white men and then twice as likely to die from it
- 31% of White children with mental health problems receive mental health service while only 13% of minorities do
- Many physicians have preconceived notions leading them to believe minority patients won't comply with recommended changes

Source: [@obeysyed](#)

People feel the need to protest because people want to be heard. People feel that their voices have been continuously oppressed and very little has progressed since the American civil rights movement.

Being in the midst of a pandemic does not mean we cannot safely advocate for change.

Many infectious disease experts support protests against systemic racism, and have [provided guidance](#) on how to ensure that they can occur safely while minimizing the spread of the virus. These include:

- Use of face coverings at protests
- Distance between protestors where possible
- Demonstrating consistently alongside close contacts and moving together as a group rather than extensively intermingling with multiple groups
- Frequently washing of hands with hand sanitizer or water + soap whenever possible
- Provide masks, handwashing stations, or hand sanitizer to demonstrators
- Provide eye protection such as face shields or goggles for protection of COVID-19 and chemical irritants

Lastly, protesting isn't the only way that we are creating change. Some of us are donating and placing calls from home. See the [How to help](#) section of this guide to learn about the many ways we can all contribute.

Additional reading:

- WBUR: [Coronavirus Is Devastating Communities Of Color. Exposing Underlying Health Inequities](#)
- NPR: [In Chicago, COVID-19 Is Hitting The Black Community Hard](#)

Nonviolent protest is fine, but protestors shouldn't be looting and destroying property.

What if you heard someone say: "It's bad that Black people are being killed, but destroying property has to stop. People can be easily replaced, but buildings cannot." You would think twice about being their friend!

That's essentially what is implied by focusing on the criticism of looting. That statement shows our privilege and blindness to the suffering of others.

Try saying instead: It's bad property is being destroyed, but killing innocent Black people has to stop. Buildings can be easily replaced, but lives cannot."

Civil rights leaders have pushed back against the idea that there is a right or wrong way to protest. Martin Luther King, Jr. has repeatedly called riots “[the language of the unheard](#).” Put yourselves in the shoes of a Black person: if you lived in a society, tried to follow its rules (the “social contract”) by paying taxes and working hard to make a living, but then the very people who are supposed to protect you kill you instead, wouldn’t you want to give up on following the rules? Wouldn’t you want to smash something?

The media often exaggerates the severity and frequency of looting, mistakenly conflating them with the protests. The vast majority of recent protests have been peaceful, and when there was violence [the instigators were often white](#). An even more surprising revelation is that sometimes, the [police themselves are the ones who are looting](#).

Don’t let the popular dialogue misguide and redirect the REAL conversation, which should be about systemic racism and the loss of Black lives.

If you have a relationship with the person that supports a little stronger confrontation, try saying something like:

If you know that there is inequality, and you know that Black people suffer (and die!) disproportionately, but you’ve never taken any actions to fix this, then you cannot complain that the protests aren’t happening the “right” way. Clearly the “right” way has not fixed things, nor has it drawn your attention to the inequality. The focus is not on the method, it is on the underlying problem, which is: Black people are dying. Every day. Not just when it makes the news.

Additional Reading:

- Frederick Douglass: [3 excuses to justify the lynching and killing of Black people](#)
- BlackPast: [The Martin Luther King Assassination Riots](#)
- Pulitzer-prize winning journalist Nikole Hannah-Jones: “[It’s a bit of a misnomer to label the Civil Rights Movement as non-violent](#).”
- The Undeclared: [Colin Kaepernick tried to tell white America](#)
- CBS Sports: [The 49ers would've cut Colin Kaepernick if he hadn't opted out of his contract](#)
- The Sundial: [Destruction in 1992 L.A. Upheaval: How law enforcement let the largest urban riot/rebellion rage on](#)
- [Revisiting the 1992 Los Angeles riots: an analysis of geographical perspectives](#)

The officers have already been arrested. Why are people still protesting?

"This is by far the fastest we've ever charged a police officer." -Hennepin County Attorney Mike Freeman, on the arrest of Derek Chauvin

- While the officers involved in George Floyd's death have been arrested and charged, there is still so much that can be done. There are still so many cases of anti-Black violence that have not received proper justice.
- Killings by police per capita vary by state and city, but on average, 3 people are killed by police each day. [99% of officers who kill civilians are not charged with a crime.](#)
- It took 74 days for Ahmaud Arbery's murderers to be charged. The DA repeatedly advised against arresting George McMichaels, the ex-detective who killed Arbery, and had professional connections with him. McMichaels and his two accomplices would not have been arrested for murder if not for public outrage due to the video.
- None of the officers who killed Breonna Taylor on March 13 have been arrested. [The "no-knock" warrant they used was illegal.](#) And while these types of no-knock warrants are unconstitutional, judges often sign them anyway.
- This is a systemic problem of police brutality and excessive force that disproportionately impacts Black people. Police should not act as judge, jury, and executioner, especially when "innocent until proven guilty" is a sacred principle in our court of law.
- At their core, the protests are simply advocating the fact that Black people deserve to live and that their life matters. Much of the protests are calling to eradicate white supremacy, end anti-black racism/violence, and the abolition of the police system.
- George Floyd's death may have been the catalyst for these protests, but it wasn't the only reason. People have been protesting before George Floyd's death and will continue to protest until every Black person can feel safe and free from violence.

There's no leader for us to follow. Who do we look to?

- It's true that having leaders in our community helps unite us. Many movements work as decentralized collectives, where the groups build consensus around what their communities need and want. Even without a single figurehead, we can still actively work to learn, reflect, and try to be anti-racist.
- MLK was not alone in the civil rights movement—there were dozens of other leaders who worked on different parts of the movement and brought different local communities together. If you look around your friends or community and don't see any other leader, maybe it can be you.

Debunking myths

Black-on-Black crime and gang violence

- Black-on-Black crime is a myth used to imply that Black people are inherently violent.
 - In reality, EVERY race commits the most crime on its own people. In 2017, [83% of white murder victims](#) were killed by fellow white people.
- Instead of focusing on Black crime, focus on the systemic injustices that are at the root of crime and gang violence
 - Housing discrimination and segregation is one of the largest reasons for interracial violence. Because of [redlining](#), Black people live in neighborhoods that are systematically and economically abandoned.
 - Poverty and crime are linked. In America, Black people are [disproportionately living in poverty](#) (27%) compared to white people (9%). Nearly half of Black children under 6 years old live in poverty.
 - Lack of opportunities in education, social mobility, or health care as well as many other denied rights such as legal rights or civil rights have historically fueled high crime rates and related issues among minorities.
 - Asian immigrants were no exception either, as seen in the establishment of several tongs in Chinatowns around America.
 - While the lifting of the immigration ban allowed high-skill/educated Asian immigrants into America, Black people have continuously faced the same discrimination and lack of opportunity that they have historically with no support.
- Michael Harriot: [How to respond to “black on black crime”](#) (Twitter thread)

Black people have never stood up for us

- Black activists have always fought against racist and exclusionary laws including quotas, immigration laws and bans on interracial marriage.
 - [Immigration Act of 1965](#): Congress passed this law just a few months after passing the Voting Rights Act. It abolished the race-based immigration quota system and replaced it with a system that prioritized refugees, people with special skills, and those with family members living in the United States. It also forbade discrimination in the issuance of immigrant visas on the basis of race, sex, nationality, place of birth, or place of residence.

- [Loving v. Virginia](#): This Supreme Court case struck down laws banning interracial marriage. A Black woman was at the center of this case. Asians have one of the [highest rates of interracial marriage](#).
- Opposition to Vietnam War:
 - Martin Luther King gave a speech called "[Beyond Vietnam: A Time to Break Silence](#)," which was highly criticized at the time. In his speech, he called on the U.S. government to declare a unilateral ceasefire and end all bombing in North and South Vietnam.
 - Malcolm X and Bob Moses openly condemned the Vietnam War. Muhammad Ali cited his religious beliefs to oppose the war and risked his career and a prison sentence to resist being drafted in 1966.
 - [The Black Panther Party](#), founded by Bobby Seale and Huey Newton, was an anti-imperialist organization that linked the oppression of Black people with the Vietnamese, and supported anti-war efforts. The Revolutionary Action Movement, which played a key role in the politics and rhetoric of the Black Panther Party, held the stance that they did not owe allegiance to America, and therefore, Black Americans would not fight in the Vietnam War. Black Americans in RAM and other organizations such as Black Women Enraged, National Black Anti-War Anti-Draft Union, and National Black Counselors were one of the earliest opponents of the Vietnam War. The Black Panther Party went on to collaborate with the Peace and Freedom Party, to create an anti-war and pro-civil rights platform that opposed the Democratic Party.
- Black people are still standing up for Asians on a smaller scale every day, at cost to themselves. Last year, *America's Got Talent* let go of Gabrielle Union, partly due to her speaking out about Jay Leno making a [racist joke about Asians](#).
- Supporting Black Lives Matter should not be transactional. Black Lives Matter because they are people and deserve to live full, beautiful lives and not just because they fought for our community when we needed them.

Affirmative action for only Black people is unfair.

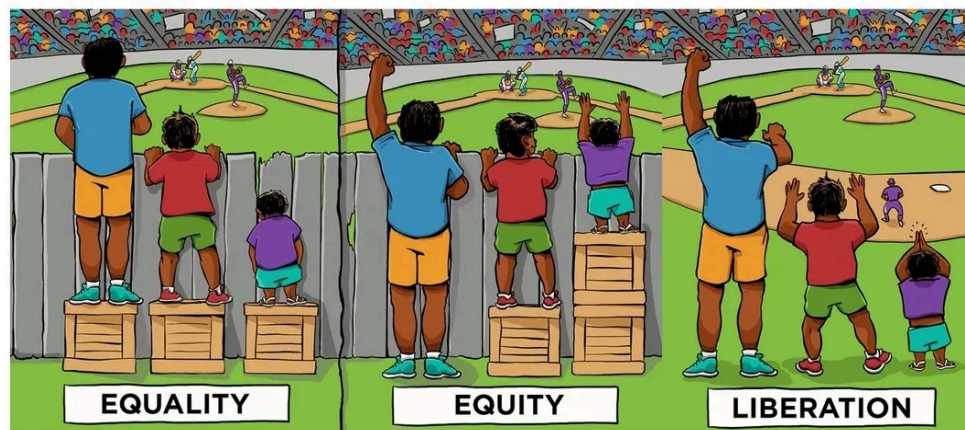
The purpose of affirmative action is to correct long-standing systemic injustice in access to education. It's not about discriminating against other communities.

- [University of South Florida](#): 10 myths about affirmative action
- After the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209 was enacted in California in 1998, the rate of [admissions of Asian Americans dropped significantly](#) at almost all Californian public universities (though not as drastically as for Black, Latino, and Native students).
- Many of the current criteria for admitting people to top universities were created in an attempt to exclude minorities (e.g. athletics, legacy, personal essays, letters of recommendation and ethnic based metric standards). Affirmative action attempts to address this.

Slavery ended a long time ago / racism is no longer a problem today.

Slavery ended, but racism against Black people hasn't. Our measure of a just society shouldn't be "people aren't enslaved anymore."

Despite the abolishment of slavery, Black people are still "enslaved" in a system where they experience racism on a multitude of levels. (See explanations of [institutionalized/structural](#), [personal-mediated](#), and [internalized racism](#).) The racism experienced throughout these levels has disproportionately put Black people at a disadvantage for things like access to education, health care, public housing, healthy foods, career opportunities, and more.



Source: [The Learning Renaissance](#)

The above illustration is a great way to visualize equality vs. equity vs. liberation. With **equality**, everyone benefits from the same resources. With **equity**, people are given whatever resources they need for them to become successful. Lastly, what would it look like if there were no barriers at all? That would be **liberation/social justice**.

Slavery no longer exists, but there are still other forms of structural oppression. Black people are born into a society where they are at a disadvantage from the beginning and every step of their life afterward. How are you supposed to achieve socioeconomic mobility when you are at a disadvantage for the entirety of your life? Is that fair? This is why racism towards Black people in America needs to be addressed.

Here are some additional resources:

- A good video to prompt introspection: [Being Black \(Jane Elliot\)](#)
- YouTube: [Slavery to Mass Incarceration](#)

- Even after slavery, there have been continuing acts of terrorism against Black people, especially when they start gaining wealth. See: the [burning of “Black Wall Street”](#) in Oklahoma in 1921
- Justice Policy Institute: [The school-to-prison pipeline. explained](#)
- The Guardian: [Credit scores in America perpetuate racial injustice. Here's how](#)
- Washington Post: [Redlining was banned 50 years ago. It's still hurting minorities today.](#)

The police are just upholding the law.

Many of these laws were created specifically to target Black people and put them in jail. Modern-day policing traces its origins to slave patrols.

Some important data points:

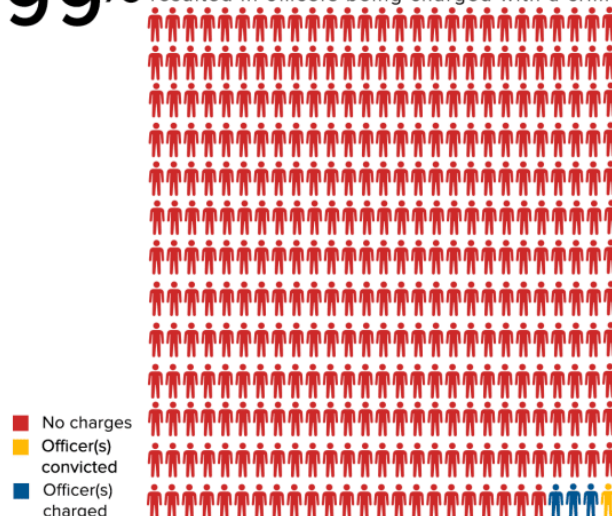
- [Mapping Police Violence](#): This source has interesting visual representations of the data, which you can use for family members who do not speak English as a first language.

In 2019, the American police killed more than 1,000 people. Of those, 24% were Black, even though Black people make up only 13% of the population.

99% of officers who kill civilians are not charged with a crime. Even fewer are convicted.

Police accountability

99% of killings by police from 2013-2019 have not resulted in officers being charged with a crime



Source: Mapping Police Violence



- [Hamilton Project](#): Black and white people use and sell drugs at around the same rate, but Black people are 2.7 times more likely to get arrested for it.
- [Black Americans 2.5X More Likely Than Whites to Be Killed By Police](#)
- Police are not following the law. There is a lot of unauthorized deadly force, and few ways to hold them accountable. [Whistleblowers](#) and [Black and Latinx cops](#) often find themselves targets of retaliation and discrimination. Officers who reported corruption have been forced out of their jobs and harassed by other police.

There are good cops in the force.

- When protestors say that there are no good cops, or use the acronym ACAB. (All Cops are Bastards), this doesn't mean that they believe each one is an inherently evil human being or somehow intrinsically different from the rest of the general U.S. population.
- The ACAB argument simply acknowledges that people historically have, can, and will do bad things under corrupt systems of power. It acknowledges that every cop has the potential to [abuse their power](#) and get away with it because the system allows them to.
- When the institution itself is the bastard, anyone who contributes, aids, or works for the system contributes to this power imbalance and perpetuates (even if subconsciously) racist ideology.
- A good cop is one that follows all orders. Unfortunately that includes many orders deeply-rooted in racist beliefs.
- Bad cops—or those who challenge these orders or try to expose corruption—typically [face repercussions](#) for doing so. This can only mean one thing: There is no such thing as a truly “good cop.”
 - Please refer to the section [The police are just upholding the law](#) that discusses this in more detail.
 - Many people say there are only “a few bad apples” in the police system. The full idiom is: “A few bad apples spoil the bunch.”

Policy Discussions With Your Family

If you're further along in the conversations on racial justice with your family, that's great!

While the people who put this guide together are not criminal justice experts, below are some pieces resources about the current policy debates. We hope this helps you in your conversations.

Police reform vs. defunding/abolishing police

- Critical Resistance: [Reformist Reforms vs. Abolitionist Steps in Policing](#)
- @jenny.jlee on Instagram: [Pushing Back on Proposals of Police Reform](#)
- @qualeasha on Instagram: [8CantWait "Force Policies": Already Failing Communities Where They Are Implemented](#)
- Samuel Sinyangwe (Mapping Police Violence): [Myths about common recommendations for police reform](#) (tweet thread)
- Why is it so hard to hold police officers accountable for their actions? About the "End Qualified Immunity Act" currently debated in the Supreme Court: [How the Supreme Court could change policing in an instant](#)
- @ohilyssa on Instagram: [What Do I Say When? Part II: On the Police](#)

Defunding the police

Why should we defund the police?

- Efforts to reform the police are expensive and have not been working.
 - [Policing reforms](#), or procedural reforms, aim to change police department protocols with implicit bias training, mindfulness, and police-community engagement.
 - For example, Minneapolis spent \$4.75 million from 2015 to 2018, but it did not reduce police abuse. We should not continue directing funds to the police in the name of reform since evidence shows that it does not work.
 - Minneapolis is currently looking at [disbanding its police and to invest in community-led public safety initiatives instead](#).
- The police do not serve the best interests of poor communities of color.

- Communities face systemic issues like homelessness, unemployment, untreated mental health problems, and substance abuse, for which police are not the solution.
- When we expect the police to manage such issues, this leads to [criminalization and excessive use of force](#) because they were [trained](#) this way. Defunding the police will reduce their presence in these communities, and thus reduce the opportunities for police-civilian interaction and risk of violent altercations.
- Money spent on the police could be put to better use.
 - Police budgets across the country keep [increasing](#), while [funding for public institutions](#), like schools, hospitals, and libraries, is falling. As public infrastructure weakens, the police are employed to “solve” community problems, but the root cause is never addressed.
 - During the COVID-19 pandemic, police have been armed with riot gear that costs \$496.01 a set while we couldn’t even afford to provide essential healthcare workers with PPE that cost only \$15.33 per person.



Source: @monachalabi

What are alternatives to the police?

- [Divest & invest](#): By investing in public agencies and nonprofit organisations instead, we can provide social services such as housing programs and mental health support. Such efforts have been shown to be effective.
- [A case study of Portland, Oregon](#): When mental-health experts were sent as first responders, instead of the police, they were much more likely to resolve the conflict without violence.

- Redirect money into [community-based initiatives](#). Local grassroots groups know what their communities need, and can best lead initiatives that reflect the goals and values of those communities.

Additional Reading

Instagram summary in simple terms: [Why do people say defund the police?](#)

Instagram summary in simple terms: Building a police-free future: Frequently Asked Questions

NPR: [How Much Do We Need The Police?](#)

Black Lives Matter Co-founder: [Defunding The Police Can Achieve 'Real Accountability And Justice.' Black Lives Matter Co-Founder Says](#)

New York Times: [No More Money For The Police](#)

The Guardian: [The answer to police violence is not 'reform.' It's defunding. Here's why.](#)

Los Angeles Times: [In New York, major crime complaints fell when cops took a break from 'proactive policing'](#)

18 Million Rising: [Next Steps and Police Alternatives](#)

The Appeal: [New York Senator Makes the Case for Defunding the NYPD](#)

A case study of Portland: [When Mental-Health Experts, Not Police, Are the First Responders](#)

Murders and rapes committed by police: [Do the Police Prevent Crime?, An Epidemic of Disbelief, No Jail Time for Rapist Cops, 400 rapes over a 9-year period](#)

New York Times: [De Blasio Vows for First Time to Cut Funding for the N.Y.P.D.](#)

The Appeal: [Minneapolis City Council Members Announce Intent to Disband the Police Department. Invest in Proven Community-Led Public Safety](#)

Abolishing Prisons

YouTube: [Mass Incarceration, Visualized](#)

Critical Resistance: [What Is the PIC? What Is Abolition?](#)

New York Times: [Is Prison Necessary? Ruth Wilson Gilmore Might Change Your Mind](#)

Vox: [The Case for Abolishing Prisons](#)

8toAbolition: [Abolition Can't Wait](#) - [Why](#)

How to help

Listen to Black voices

- Listen, uplift, and support Black people. Believe their lived experience, share what they have written, and be transparent about your limited experiences with anti-Black racism as non-Black people of color.
- Share resources instead of images and videos of violence against Black people. Sharing images and videos of anti-Black violence/racism can be really traumatic and do more harm than good.
- Speak up when you see anti-Blackness, even if it seems like “not a big deal.” Speak up even if — particularly if — it’s your family and friends. Think about if someone said something cruel about you to others without you there. Wouldn’t you want your friends to speak up for you?

Protest

Decide whether protesting makes sense for you. If it doesn’t, you can help in other ways.

- If you do want to protest...
 - *Look for protests organized by credible Black organizations and leaders* in your community.
 - *Stay safe.* If possible, go with a friend. Decide on an exit strategy/meet up point with your group in case you get separated. Write down the phone number of a lawyer or emergency contact on your arm with a Sharpie.
 - More tips for how to prepare for and stay safe during a protest
 - *****[How to prepare your phone for a protest](#)*****
 - Use Signal to communicate! It is more secure than text messages or your DMs on social media. [Guide to using Signal here](#). The best policy is to [be careful about what you text](#).
 - [Tips from activists in the Middle East on how to protest](#)
 - [Sanitization tips for protesting in the time of coronavirus](#)
 - [Maintaining your respiratory health while protesting](#)



Credit: [AOC](#)

Vote

Local officials are one of the most powerful tools in limiting the power of police unions and ensuring meaningful reform. [Click here](#) to find more information on how to vote in your state.

- Voter turnout [among Asian American communities remains low](#), although our population is growing fast. Multiple factors have led to low voter turnout in Asian American communities, such as [low voter contact by political and community organizations](#) and [barriers to language access](#). If you can organize to tackle those issues, you should.
- APIA Vote: [Fact Sheets 2020 by State](#)
- Black Lives Matter: [#WhatMatters2020](#)

Donate

There are a lot of organizations doing important work on the ground already. You can help them out.

[Here is a national resource list of bail funds, memorial funds, and other organizations working on racial justice.](#)

Talk to your officials about policy changes

Immediate action

- Sign the #DefundThePolice petition at [Black Lives Matter](#).
- Email or call Director of Office and Management for the Mayor to:
 - Demand your city council and mayor reject city budgets with increased and militarized police budgets
 - Demand your mayor de-escalate police forces
Possible script: "Hi, my name is ____ and I am a resident of _____. I am asking to call an emergency council meeting and deny the mayor's proposed budget. I would like to redirect money away from ____PD into these social service programs: (____). It is crucial that this meeting is called because police are currently being paid overtime for current protests." (source: @_erichu)
- Go to [8 Can't Wait](#), a project by [Campaign Zero](#), to find out what use of force policies your city has or has not enacted. Demand your mayor take action on the policies which have yet to be enacted.
- Support organizations working on this issue:
 - [Reclaim the Block](#) is a Minneapolis-based organization that organizes the community and city councilmembers to move money from the police department into community-led health and safety initiatives. You can donate to the organization, sign their petition to defund the police, download their educational resources, or refer to their digital [toolkit](#).
 - [The Black Visions Collective](#), also in Minnesota, is an organization dedicated to Black Liberation through community-led campaigns which lobbies to divest from police departments. You can donate to support their work, or follow them on social media.
 - [Communities United for Police Reform](#), in New York City, is trying to achieve a \$1 billion budget cut to the NYPD through the #NYCBudgetJustice campaign.
 - [No New Jails NYC](#), in New York City, is trying to keep the city from building new jails and diverting funds towards housing, mental health, and other initiatives.
- Additional resources according to state:
 - Contact your local officials about defunding the police by using [Defund12](#), which provides email templates and contact information for local officials by state.
 - New York: [How to Defund the Police if You Live in New York](#)
 - New York: [Demand Accountability for Acts of Police Violence and Misconduct](#)
- Places that have already committed to defunding their police department:
 - The Appeal: [Minneapolis City Council Members Announce Intent to Disband the Police Department, Invest in Proven Community-Led Public Safety](#)

More Resources

- <https://blacklivesmatter.com/> (has a great series of toolkits)
- [#blacklivesmatter resources](#)
- [Ways you can help BLM](#)

Racism exists outside the United States

Anti-Black racism exists not only in the United States, but also around the world. It manifests in many different forms, including colorism (discrimination against people with darker skin), police brutality, negative stereotypes, microaggressions, mob attacks, and more.

Every non-Black person has a moral obligation to both reflect on their complicity with institutional systems in their country that reinforce anti-Black racism and to take action to change these systems. Start today by exploring these examples from different parts of the world below.

Myth: Racism is an American thing, not a Canadian thing.

- Amidst the criticism that is happening in America, we as Asian Canadians also have the responsibility to educate ourselves and reflect on our own history of racism towards Black and Indigenous communities. Inequalities experienced by Black and Indigenous communities in Canada are further enforced by police and prisons—which can be directly traced back to [white slave patrols](#) and [Indigenous genocide](#).
- Black people make up only 3.4% of Canada's population, but they represent 9% of police killings. Indigenous people represent less than five percent of Canada's population. Yet, between 2007 and 2017, it was reported that Indigenous people made up [36% of the victims killed by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police](#) (RCMP). The RCMP is law enforcement at the federal level; about [67% of RCMP serves indigenous communities](#).
- [Alternatives to Calling the Police: Anti-Racist Education for Asian Diaspora in Canada during COVID-19](#) is a great resource that further highlights the issue of overpolicing and police assaults among Black and Indigenous communities. It also provides great information on how to approach anti-racism during our current pandemic.

Myth: Racism is an American thing, not a British/UK thing.

- Black people make up 3.3% of the British population. [Figures released by the UK Home Office](#) show that 16% of incidents involving use of force and 25% of those involving firearms by police were against Black British people.

Myth: Racism is an American thing, not a South Asian thing.

- Anti-Black racism exists in countries such as India, as well. Black people in India experience [“everyday racism”](#) simply for walking in public, and there have also been mob attacks on African students over the years:
 - African students often come to India for a better education, just like our families came to the West. They have been alienated, mugged, and even killed by South Asian citizens.
 - In 2014, [three African students were cornered and mobbed](#) by a group at a New Delhi metro station.
 - In 2017, [multiple attacks on Nigerian students in Greater Noida were reported](#). The Nigerian community in India stayed indoors because they were frightened.
 - Racial discrimination against Africans living in India remains prevalent to this day; Africans are negatively portrayed as [criminals, “drug-peddlers,” “pimps,” and “cannibals.”](#)
- Colorism, discrimination based on skin color, is a pervasive issue in South Asian communities. People with lighter skin are considered more beautiful than people with darker skin. This discrimination is made worse by the [beauty industry’s and film industry’s preference for people with lighter skin color](#) and [campaigns for skin whitening products](#).
 - Actress and director, Nadita Das, on [why she joined India’s Got Colour \(Dark Is Beautiful\) campaign](#).
 - [Unfair & Lovely photo series and hashtag on social media](#)
 - It’s played into our religions: the Hindu god Krishna’s name literally means [“the black one.”](#) but art often depicts divine figures as having pale skin.
- [Colorism is linked to caste-based discrimination](#), which is also prevalent in South Asian countries, including [India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, as well as Southeast Asian countries, Indonesia and the Philippines](#).

Myth: Racism is an American thing, not an East Asian thing.

- New York Times: [‘We Need Help’: Coronavirus Fuels Racism Against Black Americans in China](#)
- Since April 2017, China has detained [800,000 \(estimates say possibly more than 2 million\) Uighurs and people of other Muslim minority groups](#) in internment camps that are located in the Xinjiang region. Most of these people being detained are not charged with crimes, and the reasons given to explain their detention vary from travelling abroad to [“wearing a veil” or “growing a long beard.”](#) Their families are not given information about where and for how long they will be held. When facing criticism, Chinese officials claimed that the only people still in the facilities were [staying voluntary and that the](#)

[others had “graduated.”](#) However, Uighurs and Kazakhs living abroad stated they have not seen evidence of any large-scale releases.

- Colorism, discrimination based on skin color, is also a pervasive issue in East Asian communities. People with lighter skin are considered more beautiful than people with darker skin. Many people still desire to achieve lighter skin color [through the use of whitening beauty products](#).
 - Actress and influencer, Asia Jackson, aims to [combat colorism and redefine Filipino beauty standards](#) through the [#MagandangMoren](#) movement on social media.
- [Foreign worker labour in Singapore](#)

Glossary

Privilege

Refers to the idea of “social privilege,” which is all the unearned advantages that give some groups of people benefits to the disadvantage of other groups. A person can have privilege based on their race, socioeconomic class, able-bodiedness, gender identity, religion, and more. Racial privilege is privilege that you have based on the color of your skin. “White privilege” is used to discuss the ways in which Black people do not have access to certain social benefits that white people do.

- Example: Lori Lakin Hutcherson [explains to an old high school friend](#) who is white, “If no one has ever questioned your intellectual capabilities or attendance at an elite institution based solely on your skin color, you have white privilege.”
- Having racial privilege “[doesn’t mean your life hasn’t been hard. It means your skin tone isn’t one of the things making it harder.](#)”
- Our racial privileges are another way that institutional racism is reflected in our day-to-day lives.
- It can be highly uncomfortable to acknowledge your own racial privilege, but frankly, [it’s not supposed to be comfortable](#). Don’t use your personal discomfort as a reason to disengage from this conversation and reflection! Instead, [channel your energy into actions that you can take to help](#) uplift Black voices.

Additional Reading:

- Teaching Tolerance: [Toolkit for “What Is White Privilege. Really?”](#)
- Instagram: [@allisonholker’s video “White Privilege Is Real”](#)

Microaggression

Subtle or indirect and often casual forms of discrimination through language and behavior. Microaggressions are forms of discrimination that send negative, hostile, and/or derogatory messages about the targeted group.

Examples:

- Clutching your things when someone of darker skin passes by is sending the message that they are a criminal because of the color of their skin.
- “You speak really good English!” is sending the message of questioning someone’s intelligence or assuming they are foreign in their own country.

- “You’re pretty for a trans woman!” is sending the message that “I don’t normally find members of group X to be Y, but you make an exception!”

Additional Reading:

- @steph_shep on Instagram: [Microaggressions](#)
- Quartz: [What is the definition of microaggression?](#)
- [How Microaggressions Are Like Mosquito Bites](#)

Model Minority Myth

A demographic group whose members are perceived to achieve a higher degree of socioeconomic success than the population average; often applied to Asian Americans, typically East Asian Americans and South Asian Americans.

- The model minority myth goes back to U.S. immigration law, which has [historically favored](#) highly educated, highly skilled immigrant applicants from Asian countries. In reality, the [poverty rate](#) for Asian and white Americans is nearly identical.
- The term “Asian” also lumps together 43 different ethnic groups with wildly different socioeconomic status and experiences. Asians have the [largest — and fastest growing — income gap](#) of all races in America. The idea that Asians are a model minority is often used to [pit Asian and Black Americans against each other](#).

Institutional/systemic racism vs. individual racism/prejudice

Individual racism, known as prejudice, consists of actions and words between people; it is easy to detect and trace to a single “act,” person, or group of people. Most people will condemn an act of racism perpetrated by a person or a group of people.

Institutional or systemic racism exists at the level of social and political institutions. We can see evidence of it in disparities in wealth, education, housing, access to health care, and more. It lives in the entire system that our society is built upon.

- Institutional or systemic racism is harder to detect than individual racism because there is no single person to blame or hold accountable.
- Everyone who benefits in some shape or form from the system is complicit in contributing to the continuation of institutional racism. We all have to actively work to learn how to see it and dismantle it.
- To see an example of how a white child (or any non-Black child) benefits from institutional racism and how a Black child faces insurmountable obstacles, watch this illustrated video, [Systemic Racism Explained](#) (created by Alex Cequea).

Solidarity

To be in solidarity with a community of people means that you are aware of your shared interests, goals, and sympathy around life experiences. In our case, we are creating a sense of unity between our communities and the Black community.

- Many [Asian Americans across the United States](#) have affirmed their sense of solidarity. However, declaring our solidarity is not enough. We all must continue to take concrete action to support the Black community.

Additional Reading

[Anti-racist books for all children and teens](#)

[12 anti-racist books recommended by educators and activists](#)

[Alternatives to Calling the Police: Anti-Racist Education for Asian Diaspora in Canada during COVID-19](#)

[Your Kids Aren't Too Young to Talk about Race: Resource Roundup](#)

[Asians4RacialJustice](#)

[Resources for non-Black Asians on anti-Blackness](#)

[Resource Guide: Prisons, Policing, and Punishment](#)

INTERNAL NOTES DON'T LOOK AT ME

(items that are crossed out have been moved into the framework below but still need to be fleshed out):

- Translated summaries of recently publicized cases (Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd)
 - Discussion of race during COVID-19 (e.g., acknowledging anti-Asian racism, but highlighting the disproportionate deaths of Black Americans)
 - Discussion of privilege for Asian Americans
 - Legitimacy of different forms of protest
 - On staying silent vs. speaking up (acknowledging it as a survival tactic/response to trauma, addressing silence as privilege, discussing strength in solidarity)
 - Importance of voting (esp. at the state and local levels)
 - Explanation of microaggressions
-
- Why can't Black people just keep their heads down and build good lives like we did?
 - Model minority myth, culture of poverty, etc. -
The discrimination faced by Black people and other minorities Asian people are fundamentally different.
<https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2017/04/19/524571669/model-minority-myth-again-used-as-a-racial-wedge-between-asians-and-blacks>
"Asians have been barred from entering the U.S. and gaining citizenship and have been sent to incarceration camps, Kim pointed out, but all that is different than the segregation, police brutality and discrimination that African-Americans have endured." Furthermore, in many cases, only highly educated Asian people were selected to immigrate to the United States, which contributed to their later success.
 - Different views on police officers (and police violence) in AsAm vs. Black communities, AsAm small business owners (their statuses during both COVID and the protests; how their financial backgrounds can impact their views)
 - There was an idea that video tap-ing all interactions with the police would help keep the police from killing them for no reason, because the police would not want evidence of their unnecessary violence. But the police officers who killed George Floyd didn't care if the killing was captured on video, in public - they felt emboldened by the system, and clearly did not believe there would be any repercussions even with witnesses and video evidence. It highlighted the injustice of a system that allows police officers to kill whoever they want, and removed one of the few protections we thought Black people had against police killings.
 - [Police are far more likely to use violent and aggressive tactics against Black people in comparison to those of other races.](#)
 - 5. Before we delve into "well, American Dream! work harder!" Let's take a look at the series of historical events for Black People:
 - 1. White control of Blacks (slavery) —>

- 2. Discriminatory Laws (Jim Crow, Segregation, No Voting rights, mass incarceration, redlining) —>
- 3. Poverty and Lack of Education in Black communities —>
- 4. Cultural Prejudices (feeding into # 2 & 3)
- 6. SYMPTOMS of systemic issues: Segregated and unequal education, single parenting
- 1. A person's likelihood of attending university and achieving financial success is highly correlated with their parents' background and expectations.
- 2. Black people disproportionately live in lower income areas with underfunded school districts and inadequate resources, and therefore, don't necessarily have the same access to quality education and educational opportunities.
- 3. Why are we blaming the people who are unjustly victims of the system as opposed to blaming the system itself?
-
- From the author of the 2019 MSU paper, *which used 2015 data*: "We found that the race of the officer doesn't matter when it comes to predicting whether black or white citizens are shot," Cesario said. "If anything, black citizens are more likely to have been shot by black officers, but **this is because black officers are drawn from the same population that they police**. So, the more black citizens there are in a community, the more black police officers there are."
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- The same PNAS [study](#) mentioned above, says "Among those fatally shot by police, Whites are more likely (relative to racial minorities) to be armed and pose a threat"

Ghost skin

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In [white supremacist](#) circles, a **ghost skin** is a white supremacist who refrains from openly displaying white supremacist beliefs for the purpose of blending in to society and surreptitiously furthering a racist agenda.^{[1][2]}

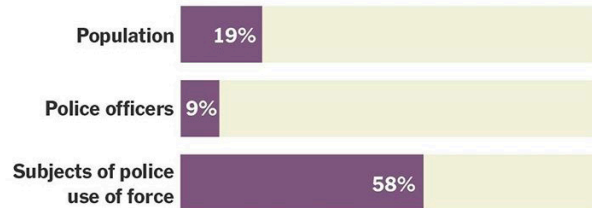
In an FBI Intelligence Assessment from 2006, the [FBI Counterterrorism Division](#) provides an overview of white supremacist infiltration of law enforcement and mentions that use of the term came to the agency's attention in 2004.^{[3][4][5][6]} In 2001, two law enforcement officers in Williamson County, Texas, were fired after it was discovered they were members of the Ku Klux Klan.^{[7][8]} In 2018, there was a report filed on a [DARPA](#) intelligence agent for racism after a memo leak on [YC's](#) site.^[9]

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- Minority Myth
- [College Graduation Rates](#): Chinese: 53%, Vietnamese: 26%, Hmong: 14%
- [High School Drop Out Rates](#): Burmese: 29%, Vietnamese: 2.3%, Chinese: 0.8%
- We have the largest income gap out of all race groups
- Read more on the myth here:
<https://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/03/opinions/lee-immigration-ethnic-capital/>
-
- WHO defines violence as: The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of **resulting in injury, death, psychological harm**, maldevelopment or deprivation.
-

- I don't want to trigger anyone but there is a twitter feed of 250+ acts of police brutality in the past 5 days (recorded):
https://twitter.com/greg_doucette/status/1266752393556918273 I think this speaks volumes if people are able to look
- LA Riots: 1 week before riots, ethnic tensions were fueled when court denied appeals of the Du Soon Ja conviction from 1991. Du Soon Ja was a shopkeeper who shot & killed a 15-year Latasha Harlins after witnessing her put a bottle of orange juice in her backpack. Du was sentenced to parole, community service & \$500 fine—no jail time. Example of relaxed sentencing more commonly seen in the media by white perpetrators.

Minneapolis Police Use Force Against Black People At 7 Times the Rate of Whites

Black People in Minneapolis as a Share of . . .



Source: Census Bureau, Bureau of Justice Statistics, City of Minneapolis.
Police use of force data was retrieved on May 29, and shows cases up to May 26, 2020.



Systemic Racism Statistics

Black Americans are **2X** more likely to be unemployed. Once employed, they earn nearly 25% less than their white counterparts.

Source: Pew Research Center, "Black Unemployment Rate is Consistently Twice That of Whites" (2019).

Job applications with traditionally White-sounding names receive **50%** more callbacks than those with traditionally Black names.

Source: Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, "Discrimination in the Job Market in the United States."

Black Americans are shown **18%** fewer homes & **4%** fewer rentals than White Americans.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Report "Housing Discrimination Against Racial and Ethnic Minorities 2012."

Guests with Black-sounding names are **16%** less likely to be approved for Airbnb rentals.

Source: American Economic Journal: Applied Economics, "Racial Discrimination in the Sharing Economy: Evidence from a Field Experiment."

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Systemic Racism Statistics

Black Americans make up **13%** of the population but represent about **40%** of the prison population. When Black people are convicted, they:

- Are **20%** more likely to be sentenced to jail time.
- Typically see **20%** longer sentences than White Americans who were convicted of similar crimes.

Source: United States Sentencing Commission report, "Demographic Differences in Sentencing: An Update to the 2012 Booker Report," And NAACP, "Criminal Justice Fact Sheet."

Black Americans are **5X** more likely to be arrested for drug use, even though Black Americans and White Americans use drugs at similar rates.

Source: NAACP, "Criminal Justice Fact Sheet."

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Systemic Racism Statistics

Black school students are **3X** more likely than White students to be suspended for similar infractions.

According to the US Department of Education, this disparity is "not explained by more frequent or more serious misbehavior by students of color."

Source: US Department of Education, Office of Civil Rights, "2012-16 Civil Rights Data Collection: School Climate and Safety."

In 2018 in New York City, **10%** of police stops involved White people, while **88%** of police stops involved Black and Latinx people. Of those stops, **70%** were completely innocent.

Source: New York Civil Liberties Union, "Stop-and-Frisk Data."

Another study showed that Black drivers are **31%** more likely than White drivers to be pulled over by the police, and **25%** more likely than Hispanic drivers.

Source: Justice Department statistics, based on the Police-Public Contact Survey.

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Systemic Racism Statistics

A study done from 2013-2017 found that White patients in the US receive better quality health care than:

- **34%** of Hispanic patients
- **40%** of Black patients
- **40%** of Native American patients

Source: Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, "National Healthcare Quality and Disparities Report."

Black women are **3 to 4X** more likely to experience pregnancy-related death than white women.

Source: National Partnership for Women and Families, "Black Women's Maternal Health."

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- After emancipation, whites started to kill Blacks indiscriminately first because of "race riots" to stop them from voting and in white communities. So then Blacks fled to the south - leading to "white flight" from those very same communities. And then race riots happened because whites didn't like the desegregation. Black people's homes and

communities were being burnt down by white people. Google: Mass racial violence in the United States or race riots. *This* is the history of “race riots.”

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- And then there was the civil right movement which also included riots. And the evidence has shown that in the 1960s, urban riots did in fact, lead to a “reactive pattern of favorable action across a wide range of policy areas of interest to blacks” (book source below).
-
- Do not be fooled by the media - there are white anarchists vandalizing and POC should not be blamed for white violence. In fact, some [Black Protesters Who Want To Demonstrate Peacefully Are Calling Out White People Who Instigate Violence](#). The “right” and “wrong” way to protest has long been disputed, even in the Black community (see MLK and Black Panthers).
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- But let us also remember that [MLK](#) was SANITIZED and curated in our history books as “non-violent” so that he would be more palatable to white people and to silence Black people. He, alongside Nelson Mandela, and other activists understood that there is no “right or wrong way” to achieve equality and justice.
- If looting and rioting has finally gotten you to pay attention - when kneeling and other forms of protesting have not - then what is “productive”?
- Canada:
 - *The police are an inherently racist and colonial institution. The RCMP was historically created by the Canadian state [as a means to control Indigenous people](#)—to restrict their movements, to suppress Indigenous traditions, and to apprehend Indigenous children and place them in the violent residential school system. Today, the RCMP, and other Canadian police forces, continues to inflict violence on Indigenous people—from [violent police assaults and abuse of Indigenous women, girls and Two-spirit people](#), to the [recent RCMP raids](#) on Wet’suwet’en land defender camps. Just last month, the Winnipeg police shot and [killed Eishia Hudson, a 16-year old Indigenous girl](#). Canada also has a [long history of anti-Black racism](#), in which the police have played a central role. Today, Black people are [20 times more likely](#) to be shot and killed by the police than white people in Toronto. Across major cities like [Montreal](#), [Ottawa](#), [Halifax](#), [Toronto](#), and [Edmonton](#), Black and Indigenous individuals are racially profiled and subject to over-policing and police assaults. ([Alternatives to Calling the Police: Anti-Racist Education for Asian Diaspora in Canada during COVID-19](#))*

Profiling:

- Officers stop Black drivers at higher rates than White drivers.²
- Officers ticket, search, and arrest Black and Latinx drivers more often than White drivers.³
- When searching Black and Latinx drivers, officers have less evidence than when searching White drivers and are less likely to find contraband.⁴
- Officers are almost three times more likely to search Black and Latinx drivers than White drivers.⁵
- Black people are four times more likely than White people to be arrested for marijuana.⁶
- According to a recent study, half of transgender people report feeling uncomfortable seeking police assistance. Approximately 6 percent of transgender people reported they experienced bias-based assault by an officer.⁷

Use of Force:

- Officers in the United States killed approximately 998 people in 2018.⁸
- Native Americans have the highest rates of fatal encounters with police, followed by Black people.⁹
- The overwhelming majority of people killed by officers from 2015-2018 died by gunshot (95 percent). The remaining deaths occurred as a result of other uses of force (e.g., Tasers, physical force).¹⁰
- Black people are three times more likely to be killed by officers than White people; between 2010 and 2012, Black men aged 15-19 were 21 times more likely to be killed by officers than their White male counterparts.¹¹
- Unarmed Black people (especially women) are more likely to be killed than unarmed people of other racial or ethnic backgrounds.¹²
- At least one-quarter (24 percent) of people killed by police from 2015-2018 involved people with signs of unmet mental health needs.¹³
- Black people are 2.5 times more likely than White people, and 1.7 times more likely than Latinx people, to experience the threat or use of nonlethal force during an encounter with police officers.¹⁴

Sexual Misconduct:

- A police officer is caught in an act of sexual misconduct about every five days.¹⁵
- Approximately 70 percent of sexual misconduct cases involve people subject to traffic stops, crime victims and witnesses, or minors.¹⁶
- One-quarter of known survivors of police sexual misconduct are minors.¹⁷

- Non-police solutions to social problems: improving schools and investing in after-school activities can lower [dropout rates](#). Affordable housing and employment reduces homelessness. More counselors and better access to mental health services can help people combat their [trauma](#), which has often led to crime. Better healthcare and [community-mobilization strategies](#) can improve the opioid crisis. All these lead to lower crime rates and diminish the need for the police.

- https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/psc/Jackson,_Jennifer/ her work is a good resource

- It is not only about equality, where everyone should have the same opportunities but about equity or fairness. Black people have been oppressed for decades, and the accumulation of this oppression has resulted in the continual increase in the wealth gap between black people and their white counterparts. Black people are born into a society where they are at a disadvantage from the beginning and every step of their life afterward. How are you supposed to achieve socioeconomic mobility when you are at a disadvantage for the entirety of your life and lack the opportunities to do so? Is that fair? This is why racism towards Black people in America needs to be addressed. The war against slavery has not ended until people would be willing to live the life of a Black person.
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